

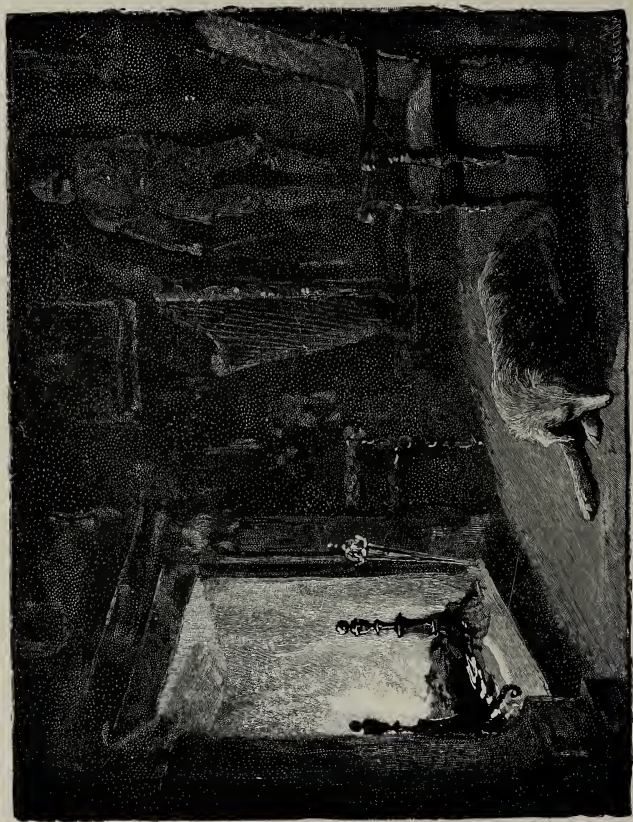
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*Wagner of
the Alleghenies.*

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—“the autumn fire
Was feasting at the well-built pyre.”

[Frontispiece.]

See page 8.

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THE

WAGONER OF THE ALLEGHANIES.

A Poem of the Days of Seventy-Six.


BY
T. BUCHANAN READ.

Look on your country, God's appointed stage,
Where man's vast mind its boundless course shall run.
For that it was your stormy coast He spread,—
A fear in winter; girdled you about
With granite hills, and made you firm and dread.
Let him who fears before the foeman shout,
Or gives one inch before a vein has bled,
Turn on himself and let the traitor out.

BOOKER.

ILLUSTRATED FROM DRAWINGS BY
HOVENDEN, FENN, GAUL, AND LOW.

PHILADELPHIA:
J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY.
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1892.

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PREFACE.



WITH the exception of some of his lyrics, none of Buchanan Read's poems has been so popular as "The Waggoner of the Alleghanies." It was written under the inspiration of feelings which were the strongest in his own nature and which never fail to awaken sympathy in most natures,—patriotism and the love of rural life. The scene is laid in the fruitful valleys of his native State, and the period is that of the Revolution. The occasion and purpose of its composition were connected with the greatest crisis in our later history, and before its publication portions of it had been made familiar through the recitations of the accomplished elocutionist, Mr. James E. Murdoch. Its themes are among those that are best suited to illustration, and the well-known American artists whose pencils have adorned this edition may be supposed to have worked *con amore*.

FEB 19 37 G. Mrs. W. C. Headen

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The Wagoner of the Alleghanies.

The scenes of this poem are chiefly laid on the banks of the Schuylkill,
between Philadelphia and Valley Forge; the time, some-
what previous to and during a great part of
the war of Independence.

DEDICATION.

TO JAMES L. CLAGHORN.

MIGHT I draw the inspiration
Which the sky not oft awards,
And so join the constellation
Of the death-defying bards;

Might I build some lofty moral,
Reaching heavenward like a hill,
On whose top should grow the laurel,
Leaning towards me at its will;—

I would gather all the honor
Not to bind around my brow;
But to you, a grateful donor,
I would come, as I do now,

And bring trophies, where the Ages
Should behold our mingled names:
But, alas! these simple pages
Are the most my labor claims.

Yet, should any leaves grow vernal
In the summer breath of praise,
Then for you, with hand fraternal,
Let me twine my wreath of bays.

INTRODUCTION.

A GUEST was I at Berkley Hall,—
And more behooves not guest to say:

The very pictures on the wall
With kindness seemed to whisper,
"Stay!"—

Old portraits of a dwindled line,
From Lely's ruff and doublet down
To Copley's matchless coat and
gown,

Or Stuart's later touch divine.
Still from their frames of gold or oak,
A knight or lady shepherdess,
In valor or in loveliness,
Leaned through the twilight air and
spoke:

They whispered that the road was
dark,

And lone the highway by the river,
That past recall the latest barque
Had swept the landing of the park,—
There on the stream I still might
mark

Its fading path of ripples quiver,
And hear the shore-wave running
after,

Like childhood with a voice of laugh-
ter.

'Twas evening, and the autumn fire
Was feasting at the well-built pyre,
Where every log, with glowing mirth,
Poured from its breast of ample girth
Some memory of April birth.

To cheer the hearth-stone of October.
There, conscious of his place and
worth,

One lordly hound, with visage sober,
Sheathed his large eyes in sleep's
eclipse,

While visions of the woodland
chase

Disturbed the slumber on his face
With twinklings at his ears and lips.

That honored hearth was like a gate

Wide with the welcome of old days;
No sulphur-fuming, modern grate,
Which black bitumen daily crams,
But waved between its ample jambs
Its flag of hospitable blaze.

A century gone 'twas lined with tiles,
Like those the hearths of Holland
show;

And still each Scripture picture smiles
And brightens in the hickory glow.

Off from those painted sermons rude,
In musing hours of solitude,
A voiceless thought hath searched the
heart

Beyond the theologian's art.
A moral winged with verse may reach
A soul no weightier words will teach,
As arrow from the archer's bow
Has cleaved where falchion failed to
go;

And truths from out a picture oft,
In colors as the iris soft,
May shed an influence to remain
Where argument would strive in vain.

The chairs were quaint, antique, and
tall,

As in some old baronial hall;
And in an alcove dusk and dim,
Like Denmark's mailed and phan-
tom king,

A suit of armor tall and grim
With upraised glaive seemed beck-
oning.

And had it walked, the gazer, drawn,
Must needs have followed on and on!
The perforated steel confessed
What death had pierced the wearer's
breast.

Near by, upon a throne upreared,
A harp of bygone times appeared;
The graceful form was deftly made,
With pearl and precious woods inlaid;
And in the firelight, as of old,
It flushed the shadowy niche with gold.

In all the orchestras which lift
The soul with rapture caught from
far,

As in a bright triumphal car
Round which celestial splendors shift,
No instrument of earth affords

An influence so divine and deep
As when the flying fingers sweep
The harp, with all its wondrous chords.

Around its honored form there lives
Romance mysterious, vague, and
old;

I see the shapes which history gives
The bards in dim traditions told,—

With visions of great kingly halls,
Where red, barbaric splendor falls;
But chiefly I behold and hear—

While bends a troop of seraphs near—
The angels, with their locks of gold.

Such shadowy halls of deep repose
A New-World homestead seldom
shows;

But such the traveller frequent sees,
Embowered within ancestral trees,
In that maternal isle whose breast
First warmed our eagle into life,
And then, with rude, unnatural
strife,
Pushed the brave offspring from her
nest,—

Which, launched upon its sunward
track,
No voice on earth could summon
back.

Here, while I slowly paced the room,
Strange visions filled the fitful gloom.
On soft, invisible feet they came;
I heard them speak,—or was't the
flame

That muttered in the chimney wide?
Faint shadows wavered at my side,
My spirit heard a spirit sigh,
While gauzy garments rustled by!
A pallid phantom of the fire
Leapt o'er the high flame wildly
higher,—

A blaze that vanished with a bound!
A whine escaped the sleeping
hound,—

A sudden wind swept up the lane,
And drove the leaves like frightened
herds;

Some, like the ghosts of summer
birds,
Fluttered against the window-pane.

Hawthorne, my friend, had I your
wand,
How, at the waving of my hand,
The place, and all its grandeur
gone,
Should on the marvelling vision
dawn!

Each shepherdess, or warrior bold,
Each knight and dame, in ruff and
frill,

Obedient to the wizard will,
Should step from antique oak or gold;
Bright eyes should glance, sweet
voices sing,

And light feet trip the waxen floor,
And round the festive board should
ring

The friendly goblets, as of yore;

And Love's sweet grief be newly
told

Under the elm-trees, as of old.

But, ah! the hazel wand you wield
Was grown by that enchanted
stream

Which sometimes flashes through
my dream,
But flows not through my barren
field!

The host came in: he took my
hand:

He saw the wonder on my face,
And said, "Ah, yes: I understand:
You marvel at this curious place,
Which starts your fancy into play.
My locks, you see, are somewhat
gray:

What touches you on me is lost.
This white hair drives romance
away,

As flowers are driven by the frost.
But if a tale would please your ear,
There's one which you are free to
hear.

"Within a little, secret drawer
Of this black, antique escritoire,
I found a simple golden case,
Which held the semblance of a face
So wondrous in its wild attire
Of floating robe and flying hair,
And eyes that thrilled the very air
To pleasure with their starry fire,
That instantly the long-passed name
Blazed on my memory like a flame;
And old traditions, dimmed by
years,

Breathed from invisible lips there
came,

And lingered in my credulous
ears,
And night and day disturbed my
soul,

Until, perforce, I wrote the whole:
That is the picture,—this the scroll.
Draw near; and let wild Autumn
blow:

He does but fan the lighted pyre:
Between the warmth of wine and
fire

Perchance the verse may thaw and
flow

From off the visionary lyre
As in the days of long ago."

PART I.

I.

BERKLEY'S BRIDE.

My grandsire, when he built the place,
Sir Hugh (you may behold him
there,

With ruffles, cue, and powdered
hair,

And proper blandness on his face)

Was Tory, and his loyal soul

No rebel dream could e'er beguile:

He would have had the land in whole,

Colossal, touching either pole,

A likeness of his native isle!

Hence the Elizabethan gables,

The lawns, the elms, the antique sta-
bles,

And all this lumber called *virtù*,

This old time frowning down the new.

But, ere I tell you more of him,

Or point the objects strange and
quaint,

I pray you rote these figures dim,

Half hid in dust and cracking paint.

That picture of those little ones,

Which represent Alcmena's sons,

Young Hercules and his weaker
brother,—

One with the snake in his baby
hands,

Crushing it as in iron bands,

While in affright recoils the other,—

Are portraits which the Berkley
mother,

In all the wealth of parental joys,

Had painted of her two fair boys;

And pictured thus, because she knew

There was that difference 'twixt the
two.

The child who holds the writhing
snake

Was Ralph; the one who seems to
quake

And shudder back,—that was Sir
Hugh.

They grew, and oft the quarrel loud

Raged 'twixt them when they were
together:

Sir Hugh was sullen, wintry, proud,

The other fierce as mad March
weather,—

A swift, cloud-blowing, whirling day,
That o'er all obstacles makes way,
Whether in wrath or whether in play,
Striding on to the stormy end,
Breaking what will not bow or bend.

The soul which lights that face of
paint,

You well discern, would scorn re-
straint;

And when he grew a stripling tall,

Knowing himself the younger
brother,

And feeling the coldness of the
other,

The place for him proved far too
small:

So, staying not for leave to ask,

Our Hercules went to seek his task;

And, lest his family might reclaim

The truant, took another name,

Joining the army. Tradition tells

He did some daring miracles.

'Twas said he fell in a midnight trench

At Fort Du Quesne, against the
French.

Sir Hugh was then the only son

To hand the name of Berkley on.

His lady—she who bears a crook,

And shepherds at her careful side

A lamb, while from her eyes a look

Of mildness chastens half her
pride—

Gave to the house one child, and
died.

That child a maiden grown you see,

With laughing eyes and tresses free,

Which wellnigh mocked the
painter's skill:

It glows as if some morning beam

Had poured here in a golden stream,

And, when the sun passed, lingered
still.

A year or two went by, and then

His heart was vacant as his hall.

No pleasure answered to his call,

No joy was in the world of men:

One passion only swayed his mind,

And thrust all other thoughts
aside,—

The passion of ancestral pride.

The blindest of all eyes most blind

Are those forever turned behind.

Sheer to the past he held his face,
 Like some mad boatman on a river,
 With eyes still on some long-gone
 place,
 Until he feels the shock and shiver
 Which tells him he is gone forever.

The empty hall, or vacant heart,
 When a new-comer passes in,
 Throwing the dusty doors apart,
 Sounds and re-echoes with a din
 Which makes the ghostly shadows
 start

And fly into the dusk remote;
 The webs about the casements float,
 And flutter on the sudden gust;
 The sun pours in its golden dust;
 The phantom Silence dies in air,
 And rapidly from hall to hall,
 With questioning eyes and back-
 ward hair,
 Wild Wonder speeds, and mounts
 the stair,
 Chasing the echoes' far footfall.

Thus into Berkley's hall and heart,
 Led by his fancy's sudden whim,
 Passed a new bride,—a face to dart
 Strange lustre through the twilight
 dim,—

A soul that even startled him,
 Until he half forgot his pride:
 Else had he never stooped to em-
 bower
 Beneath his ancient roof the flower
 To common wild-wood vines allied.

Thus oft the passion most profound,
 Which triumphed over all the
 past,
 With unexpected halt, wheels round,
 And contradicts itself at last.

He took her from a rival's breast.
 The hot youth dared him to the test:
 Alas! he fell on Berkley's steel;
 And, it is said, through woe or weal
 She ever loved the rival best.

Her heart was like a crystal spring,
 Fluttered by every breezy wing:
 Was there a cloud? a darker shade
 Was in its deep recesses laid;
 Was there a sun? the pool, o'errun
 With glory, seemed to mock the
 sun.

Her black hair, oft with violets twined
 (Her heart was with the wildest
 flowers),
 Tossed back at random, wooed the
 wind,
 That chased her through the forest
 bowers.

The woodman felt his hand relax
 A moment on the lifted axe,
 As through the vistas of the trees
 He saw her glide, a spirit blithe;
 Or, when she tript the harvest leas,
 The singing mower stayed his scythe,
 Watched where she fled, then took
 his way,
 And, mowing, sang no more that day.

With no misgiving thought or doubt,
 Her fond arms clasped his child about,
 In the full mantle of her love;
 For whoso loves the darling flowers
 Must love the bloom of human
 bowers,—

The types of brightest things above.
 One day—one happy summer day—
 She prest it to her tender breast:
 The sunshine of its head there lay
 As pillowed in its native rest,—
 A blissful picture of repose,
 A lily bosomed on a rose:
 The smallest lily of the vale
 Making the rose's sweet breast pale.

One only day,—and then the sire,
 Still to his former spirit true,
 Lest the young bud should take the
 hue

Of that which glowed too fondly by
 her,—

Of that sweet wildling, nature's
 own,—

And thereby learn the look and tone
 Of spirits alien unto pride,
 Conveyed her to the river's side.—

For months his household felt
 eclipse,—

And one of his own many ships
 Bore her across the ocean wide;
 And soon in her ancestral isle
 Was shed the sunshine of her smile.

Ere half the summer passed away,
 The lady Berkley grew less gay,
 And, like a captured forest fawn,
 She seemed to mourn some freedom
 gone,—

Mourned for her native mountain-wild,
From which her feet had been beguiled.

Her cheeks grew pale, and dim her eye,

Her voice was low, her mirth was stayed;

Upon her heart there seemed to lie
The darkness of a nameless shade;
She paced the house from room to room,

Her form became a walking gloom.

The menials, in their fancy wise,
Glared at each other with strange leers;

And, when she met her husband's eyes,
Her sad soul burst to instant tears.
He wondered with a cold surmise,
And questioned with as heartless words:

And could it be a woodland flower
Would pine within such stately bower?

Or, favored o'er all forest birds,
Could this one droop with strange desires

Within a cage of golden wires?

Have you beheld the mountain brook
Turned to some cultured garden-nook,—

How it grows stagnant in the pool,
Like some wild urchin in a school
That saddens o'er a hateful book?

Thus grew the lady, and her look
Became at last as one insane;
The cloud that long o'ercast her brain

Still whirled with gusty falls of rain,

Which drowned her heart and dimmed her eyes,
As when the dull autumnal skies
Long blur the dreary window-pane.

One morn, strange wonder filled the place,

And fruitless searching filled the day;

The stream, the woodland, gave no trace:

They only knew she passed away,—
Passed like a vision in the air,
With naught to tell of how or where.

Tradition adds how, night by night,
With hanging hair and robes of white,

With pallid hands together prest
In pain upon her aching breast,
Her spirit walked from room to room,
As if in search of something lost;
That even Berkley shunned the gloom,

Fearing to meet that breathless ghost;

For some averred her form had been
Afloat upon the river seen;
While some, with stouter words, replied,

The maniac lady wandered wide
Upon her native mountain-side.

II.

THE WILD WAGONER.

IN days long gone, "The Ship and Sheaf"

Was deemed of goodly inns the chief:—

"The Ship,"—because its ample door
Fronted the barques that lined the shore,

Where oft the sun, o'er Delaware,
Looking 'twixt masts and cordage bare,

Their shadows threw on the sanded floor,

Sailing a phantom vessel there.

And there the crews from far-off climes

Reeled in and sang their rough searhymes,

With laughter learned from the ocean gale,

As clinked their dripping cups of ale;
While froth was dashed o'er many a lip,

Like foam against a speeding ship,
And tables chronicled in scars
The tankards and the thirsty tars.

"The Sheaf,"—because the wagoner there,

The captain of the highway-ship,
Fresh breathing of his mountain air,
Hung on the wall his coat and whip;



"On many a dangerous mountain-track."

Page 13.

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And farmer, bringing his stores to
town,
And drover, who drove his cattle
down,
Conversed of pastures and of
sheaves,
The season's drouth, or ruinous rain,
Or told of fabulous crops of grain,
Or fields where grazed incredible
beeves.

'Twas April, and the evening winds
Were rattling at the open blinds;
The sign, upon its hinge of rust,
Made dreary answer to the gust,
That smote the masts like an ocean
squall,
And, whistling, mocked the boat-
swain's call.

The latch went up; the door was
thrown
Awide, as by a tempest blown;
While, bold as an embodied storm,
Strode in a dark and stalwart form,
And all the lights in the sudden wind
Flared as he slammed the door be-
hind.

The noisy revellers ceased their din,
And into the corners skulked the cur,
As the startled keeper welcomed in
The feared and famous wagoner!
Not long they brooked the keen eye-
glance
Who gazed into that countenance;
And even in his mildest mood
His voice was sudden, loud, and rude
As is a swollen mountain-stream.
He spoke as to a restive team.
His team was of the wildest breed
That ever tested wagoner's skill:
Each was a fierce, unbroken steed,
Curbed only by his giant will;
And every hostler quaked with fear
What time his loud bells wrangled
near.

On many a dangerous mountain-
track,
While oft the tempest burst its wrack,
When lightning, like his mad whip-
lash,
Whirled round the team its crooked
flash,
And horses reared in fiery fright,

While near them burst the thunder-
crash,
Then heard the gale his voice of
might.
The peasant from his window gazed,
And, staring through the darkened
air,
Saw, when the sudden lightning
blazed,
The fearful vision plunging there!

And oft on many a wintry hill
He dashed from out the vale below,
And heaved his way through drifts
of snow,
While all his wheels, with voices
shrill,
Shrieked to the frosty air afar,
As if December's tempest-car
Obeyed the winter's maniac will.

Ye knew him well, ye mountain-
miles,
Throughout your numerous dark de-
files:—
Where Juniata leaps away
On feathery wings of foam and spray;
Or queenly Susquehanna smiles,
Proud in the grace of her thousand
isles;
Where Poet and Historian fling
Their light o'er classic Wyoming;
And you, ye green Lancastrian
fields,
Rich with the wealth which Ceres
yields;
And Chester's storied vales and hills,
In depths of rural calm divine,
Where reels the flashing Brandy-
wine
And dallies with its hundred mills.

Such was the figure, strange and wild;
And at his side a twelve-years child—
An eagle-eyed, bright, wondering
lad,
In rustic winter garments clad—
Entered, and held the wagoner's
hand,
While on his visage, flushed and
tanned,
A pleasure mingled with amaze
Parted his lips and filled his gaze.
His hair was wavy, long, and black,
And from his forehead drifted back

By the last greeting of the gale,
Where still the random rain and
hail

Clung glistening like the tangled
pearls

In careless locks of Indian girls.

The host with usual "welcome"
smiled,

And praised the bright-eyed stranger
child;

Whereat the wagoner lightly spake:—

"Be all your praising for his sake:

I found him in the wagon-trough

A-swinging like a cradled thing;

With angry words I bade him off,—

He stared with large eyes wonder-
ing,

And answered that his way was
long,

His knees were tired, his feet were
sore;

And then his face new brightness
wore,

And straight his spirit burst to song:

I listened, and my frown gave o'er.

"My nature, like my hand, is rough,
My heart is of rude mountain stuff;
And yet, I own, a laughing child
Can make at times my temper mild.

"I placed him on the wheel-horse
back,

Where shoulder-shaken bells were
ringing.

The king of all the bells was he,—

So silver-clear his voice of glee;

And there he cheered the way with
singing,

Till music filled our dreary track.

"There is not much I ask or need;

Yet would I give my favorite steed

To sing the song he sang to-day,

And for a heart as light and gay:

The very team went rearing mad

With joy beneath his voice so glad,

As when the steeds of battle hear

The wild war-clarion ringing near.

Come, my young wood-bird, sing
again

That breezy song,—that mountain
strain."

And thus, from lips of fresh delight,
The wild and artless song took flight.

SONG.

I.

Where sweeps round the mountains

The cloud on the gale,

And streams from their fountains

Leap into the vale,—

Like frightened deer leap when

The storm with his pack

Rides over the steep in

The wild torrent's track,—

Even there my free home is;

There watch I the flocks

Wander white as the foam is

On stair-ways of rocks.

Secure in the gorge there

In freedom we sing,

And laugh at King George, where

The Eagle is king.

II.

I mount the wild horse with

No saddle or rein,

And guide his swift course with

A grasp on his mane;

Through paths steep and narrow,

And scorning the crag,

I chase with my arrow

The flight of the stag.

Through snow-drifts engulfing,

I follow the bear,

And face the gaunt wolf when

He snarls in his lair,

And watch through the gorge there

The red panther spring,

And laugh at King George, where

The Eagle is king.

III.

When April is sounding

His horn o'er the hills,

And brooklets are bounding

In joy to the mills,—

When warm August slumbers

Among her green leaves,

And Harvest encumbers

Her garners with sheaves,—

When the flail of November

Is swinging with might,

And the miller December

Is mantled with white,—

In field and in forge there

The free-hearted sing,

And laugh at King George, where

The Eagle is king.

Some praised the voice, and some, in doubt,

With look uncertain, gazed about ;
And some, with loyal feeling strong,
Condemned the singer and the song,
And swore it was a rebel strain
They would not calmly hear again.
Whereat the wagoner's eyes of fire
Flashed round a withering look of ire ;

His brows grew black, his temple-veins
Grew large, like brooks with sudden rains ;
From face to face he bent his glance,
And searched each quailing countenance.

Thus for a time great Henry stood,
When cries of "treason" fired his blood,

Till from his quivering lips was hurled
The answer that awoke the world.
And thus the last of all that band,*
The giants of our native land,
The safeguards in our darkest hours,
Our bulwarks and our sentinel towers,
Oft stood, and from his cavernous eyes

Sped to the heart his great replies :
Far in advance he fiercely sent
The fiery shaft of argument ;
And, when he spoke, 'twas but to tell
In thunder where the red bolt fell !

Thus stood the wagoner, till at length,
With voice subdued to conscious strength,

He spoke, and said, " Our eagle's wing
Shall mount, the eagle *shall* be king !
And jackals shall be heard no more
When Freedom's monarch bird shall soar."

'Twas passed, and none essayed reply :
Defeat or triumph filled each eye.
Whence came the boy ? was asked in vain ;

What errand brought the truant down ?

What would he in the noisy town ?—

Conjecture but replied again.

The wagoner drew the host aside,
And said, " The storm approaches near,

And soon its bolts must be defied :
For me its thunders bring no fear ;
But for this tender fledgling here,
'Twere well if he awhile might rest
Secure in some protected nest.

" This hand that long has grasped the whip
Must shortly take within its grip
Another scourge, and boldly deal
The blow a tyrant needs must feel :
Hence it were best the boy should be
Removed a little space from me,
Lest that the battling oak might wrong
The eaglet it has sheltered long."

Then said the landlord, as he took
Another survey of the face,
" It was no fancy made me trace
In that young form the Ringbolt look.
Although your answer seemed to say
He crossed but now your townward way."

" Even as I told," the wagoner said,
" The urchin, wild of heart and head,
Wishing to follow where I led,
Stealthily stole behind the wain,
Breasting the gusts of hail and rain.
It was no easy task, I fear,
For one so young to keep so near.
For miles I thought I heard the beat
And splash, behind, of following feet.
You well may guess with what surprise

I met the truant's laughing eyes,
And how that face of brave delight,
While in the trough he sat upright,
Put all my chiding words to flight.

" All day my thoughts were somewhat sad
With too much dwelling on the lad,
Contriving where I best might trust
His sheltered head when comes the gust.

For when it comes, I must be where
The thickest dangers are to dare ;
And there are cowards who would make

The boy a victim for my sake.

It was for this I would not own
 Before these Tories of the town
 The child was aught to me beside
 A friendless truant wandering down,
 Whom, pitying, I allowed to ride.

"And now, my friend, I ask of you
 To aid me in my urgent need,—
 To give or find the boy a home
 Where present danger may not come:
 For this you shall receive your due,
 Even though it cost my last good
 steed."

The host replied, "Leave that to me:
 There's many a one comes here to
 dine

Would joy beside his chair to see
 So lithe an urchin serve his wine."

"*Serve!*"—but between the wagoner's
 teeth

The word was crushed to instant
 death:

His brow grew black a moment, then
 As quickly it was cleared again.

"Be it, good landlord, as you say,"
 He murmured: "'tis but for a day,"
 And then abruptly turned away.

Under the gable-roof the boy
 Soon prest the soothing bed with joy:
 A little while he heard the sigh
 Of winds like spirits hovering nigh,
 The weather-vane that creaked aloof,
 The slumberous rain along the roof,
 And breathed the scent of bundled
 herbs

Close to the waspy rafters hung;
 Then heard the hour from the belfry
 flung,

And then the watch along the curbs,
 With voice that warns but not dis-
 turbs;

Then slept, and dreamed of his native
 place,

And woke with the red sun on his face.

III.

THE HEIRESS.

OUT of the sea, and over the land,
 Over the level Jersey sand,
 Making the bay with splendor quiver,
 Flashing a glory up the river,

Came the morn on its wheel of fire,
 Flinging flame from its glowing tire.

And with the morning, up the tide,
 Through golden vapor dim descried,
 A distant ship was seen to ride,
 Vague as a vessel in a dream,—
 More in the sky than on the stream.

Down to the wharf a horseman rode,
 As oft on many a morn before,
 To note the barques that inland
 bore;

And when his glance had swept the
 shore,

His face with sudden pleasure glowed.
 He gave the rein to a boy near by,
 And raised him in his stirrups high,
 And poised the glass at his anxious
 eye.—

Long time with breathless breast he
 gazed,

Then deeply sighed, "Now, Heaven
 be praised!"

And to a skipper sauntering past
 He cried, "Unless my vision fail,

I know the set of yonder sail,
 And the streamer at her mast!"

The skipper then a moment scanned
 The ship beneath his shading hand,

And answered, with a sudden
 smile,

"Ay, ay, sir: I should know that
 deck:

The same that saved us once from
 wreck,—

'The Lady of the Isle'!"

In haste the rider grasped the rein,
 And turned his restive steed again,
 Yet, ere he sped, with hand of joy
 A coin of silver flung the boy,
 And, as he threw, looked down and
 smiled;

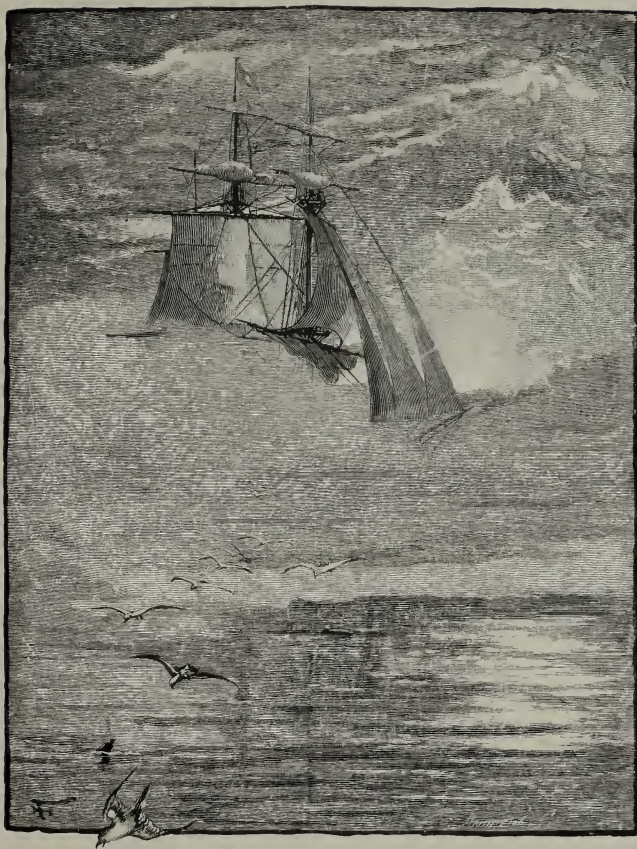
And then, as if some form had risen
 To meet him from its churchyard
 prison,

He stared upon the wondering child.

He would have spoke; but gayly
 now,

Before the startled words could join,
 The boy was toying with the coin,
 Twirling it in the sunny air,
 Laughing to see it flashing there.

A moment the rider pressed his
 brow,



“Vague as a vessel in a dream.”

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Then dashed the vision in scorn aside,
And glanced again o'er the distant
tide,

And, with a face of new delight,
Struck to the rowels the glittering
spurs:

The steed obeyed the urging burrs,
And bore proud Berkley out of
sight.

The hour went by. Before the town
The ship came up; the sails were
doft;

The happy people, a low and aloft,
Sang as the anchor rattled down,—
Down and down, as the windlass
flew,

Linking the Old World with the
New.

A crowd was gathering on the wharf,
A crowd leaned on the vessel's side,
And here and there a waving scarf
Bespoke some welcome friend de-
sired.

At the open gang a maiden stood,
Reflected in the happy flood,—
Oh, enviable flood, how blest
With such a vision on thy breast!—
Stood like a timid, startled fawn
Gazing where its mates are gone;
Stood like a white star in the dawn,
Looking with inquiring eyes
Where its westward pathway lies.

Loud rumbling to the shore anon
A stately coach came proudly drawn,
With the ancient Berkley arms
thereon;
And soon to land the maid, whose
hair
Shed amber beauty in the air,
Was borne, and on her father's breast
The long-expected child was prest.

The gold of fifteen summer suns
Was tangled in young Esther's
locks;
Her voice, it was a rill that runs
Half spray among the flowers and
rocks;
The hues of the dewiest violet
Within her liquid eyes were set;
Her form was small, her figure light
As is some fabled fountain-sprite;

The ærial scarf about her twined
Like gossamer, seemed to woo the
wind;

A shape so light, she seemed to be
That vision which poets only see,—
The spirit of that iris small
Poised on the mist of a waterfall.

Foremost amid the crowd amazed
The truant urchin stood and gazed.
His sunbrown cheek and large dark
eyes,

His long black hair and rustic guise,
Contrasted with the maiden bright,
In her auroral beauty dight,
As if some offspring of the eve
His dusk home in the west should
leave,

To gaze, by love and wonder drawn,
On some fair daughter of the dawn.

Again the proud man, in his joy,
Shuddered as he beheld the boy;
But the happy maid looked round and
smiled,—

Smiled through her tears at the vision
wild
Of flashing eyes and raven hair,
And cheeks long tanned by mountain-
air.

That smile went to the urchin's heart,
Secure as ever archer's dart
Sped to the target's central shade,
Long quivering where it struck and
stayed.

But soon the carriage, with rumbling
loud,

Conveyed the lovely shape from
sight;
And he felt like a traveller in the
night

When the moon glides into a thunder-
cloud

And will no more return to sight.

Out of the vessel came many a box
Of Berkley's treasures manifold;
Some with iron bands and locks,
Some from the cabin, some from
the hold.

Some were carried, some were
rolled;
But one, with curious shape, to
shore

With careful hands the sailors bore:

They said it contained a harp of gold
Of strange device,—they knew no
more.

A wain took up the various load ;

The truant followed it out of town,
By wild, adventurous wonder drawn,
Along the winding highway road,
Where Berkley Hall looked proudly
down

Over its river-reaching lawn.

When Berkley saw the boy again,
He took him by the willing hand,
And asked him questions simple,
plain,

In easy words to understand ;
But still the youth, with laughing
eyes,
Made answer with wide, vague re-
plies ;
Nor would he tell from whence he
came,
But answered, "Ugo" was his name.

And then the master smoothed his
hair,

And said, in soothing accents mild,
"It is a barren world, my child,
And full of hearts as bleak and bare
As is a winter heath forlorn,
Where only thrives the tangled
thorn ;

And when a stray lamb wanders there
Its sides are sorely fleeced and torn.
What can you to secure your bread ?
Or how at night procure your bed ?"

The boy looked up with wondering
face,

Which told such thought had never
place

Within the precincts of his brain ;
And then he gayly cried again,
With voice on laughter's sudden
wing,

"So please you, master, I can sing !"

"A fair profession, by my troth !"

Sir Hugh replied, "when tune and
words

Are fitted well, and, suiting both,
The spirit with the voice accords :

But they come off the hungriest
birds

Who, so enamored of their strain,
Sing while the others, in the grain,
With voiceless but industrious beaks,
Feed well through all the harvest
weeks.

But pour me from your frolic heart
A sample of your vocal art."

His simple tongue no urging stayed,
And thus the call for song was paid.

SONG.

I.

Where the peaks first greet the
morn,
Where the mighty streams are
born,—
Streams that sweep from east to
west,
Bearing great arks on their breast,—
Where the eagle rears her young
Barren rocks and pines among,
There's a child which knows no fear,
In the home of the mountaineer.

II.

Oft among the forests wild
The lone woodman hears the child
Singing with the earliest dawn,
And his playmate is a fawn :
When that fawn's broad antlers
spring,
They shall hear him louder sing ;
Then his startling song shall cheer
Far and wide the mountaineer.

III.

Then his hero-hand shall take
In its grasp a crested snake,
And its front, so proudly crowned,
Shall be humbled to the ground,—
Humbled, trampled in the sand,—
And no longer fright the land ;
Then the world shall thrill to hear
Songs of that young mountaineer.

The listener, half-way frowning,
smiled,

And said, "Perchance you are that
child

Far wandering from your mountains
wild,

And full of those obnoxious songs
But fit for rebel ears and tongues?"

"Oh, no!" the laughing youth replied;

"Although I come from the mountain-side,

My songs I learned from a school-man gray,

Who, when the children went to play,
Oft called us round him in a ring,
And, singing, taught us all to sing."

Then Berkley's brow relaxed his frown,

And he looked still more kindly down;

For there was something in that voice
Which made him sigh and yet rejoice;
And then he cried, "Come in! come in!"

I care not what your kith or kin,
Your face and singing please me well;

And, if you will, here may you dwell,

And be, till your maturer age,
A gentle lady's faithful page."

IV.

THE WELCOME.

DAYS passed; and now from Berkley Hall,

When evening sped her herald star,
Gay music, with wild rise and fall,
Streamed on the air; the windows all
Shot their red beams of splendor far,

Firing the dark like beacon-torches;
While, like a wedding-train, there flowed

Gay coaches up the winding road,
Grating the gravel near the porches.

Form after form, in rich attire
Of gems and rustling garments bright,

Swept like shadows out of the night
Into the sudden blaze of light,
Gleaming as in a robe of fire.

The peasant on the distant slope,
Agaze at joys beyond his hope,

Believing the world was what it seemed,—

Alas that others should be more wise!—

Beheld them glide, as he fondly deemed,

Into a transient paradise.

Along the casements he saw them pass,

As phantoms on the flaming glass;
And when the music awoke the dance,
Like shadows they seemed to sway
and glance,

Or revellers seen in a dreamer's trance.

Fond soul, could some kind sprite
have shown

Some hearts beneath those robes
and gems,

The smile without, within the groan,
He had not sighed that, poor, unknown,

He stood apart in the open air,
Or bartered his peace with the proudest there

To wear the wealth of diadems.

On the side of the neighboring height
He saw the modest cottage light

Gleam, like a glow-worm in the night,
Through the foliage deep and dark:

Strange contrast to the splendor bright
Burning in midst of Berkley Park.

And could the marvelling man have seen

As clearly into that home serene
As into that glittering hall of pride,—

Have seen the pastor's patriarch hair

Bending over the volume wide,
And heard the old clock on the stair

Saying its "Amen" to the prayer,
And, when the evening hymn was sung,

Joining with its silver tongue,—
He had not sighed o'er his station mean,

While hearkening to that worldly din,

Nor envied the tinsel triumph thin

Of the stateliest hero of the scene.
But hearts are human moths, alas!

Fluttering against the glittering glass,

Flying from Nature's flowery ways
To worship and die at a transient blaze.

Within, beneath the chandeliers,
Wealth, envious of her two com-
peers,
Beauty and Wit, her shoulders bare,
Strode with her diamond front in
air.

There Beauty walked, too oft a shell,
A bower of roses round a cell,
A casket exquisitely bright,
With not a jewel hid from sight;
Like those proud piles by travellers
found
In foreign lands, with statues crowned,
Covered with all that charms the eye,
While within sits Poverty,
Cowering in the ancestral dust,
With scarce an ember or a crust.

And Wit, with sparkling glance, was
there,
With flashing words of transient
glare,
Of satire or of flattery,—
Thoughts that lorded or bowed the
knee:
They who lord it with haughtiest
brow
Have ever the supplest knees to bow.
All these, Wealth, Beauty, Wit,
bright three,—
Graces they were by Heaven de-
signed,
But oftener grow, through vanity,
The vices that ensnare the mind.

But there was one in whom these
three
Were joined in sweetest unity,—
To all the Virtues reconciled,
But chiefly Charity's favorite child.
So bright the spirit her form en-
shrined,
So clearly the face displayed the
mind,
That the coldest gazer's heart 'gan
melt,
And, in after-days of memory, felt
A kindlier impulse toward his kind:
And it was all to welcome her
The glittering groups collected were.

Through the crowd, on her father's
arm,—
How proud he was! how very
proud!—

She passed, like a ray of sunshine
warm
Cleaving its way through a broken
cloud.

First there was silence,—breaths long
drawn,
As they would breathe her beauty
in,
And eyes full-orbed, as they would
win
New light from her enchanted dawn;
And then the sudden whisper stirred,
Like winds within the aspens heard.
The proud man caught the applause
around,
That thrilled his depths of pride pro-
found,
Where it echoed like a bugle wound
Near caverns that prolong the sound.

Then to her thronéd harp he led,
Where lustre of gold and pearl was
shed,
Like the light that flushed the air
Around the maiden's pearl-looped
hair.
A moment her timorous fingers tried
The chords that tremulously replied,
Like reeds beside a little lake
Warned by a breeze ere the winds
awake:
She toyed with the prelude; but not
long
The herald notes foreran the song.

SONG.

I.

What though my feet have wandered
far
Through groves and lawns of an-
tique shores,
Where ever to the morning star
The enamored lark her love-song
pours,
And through enchanted woods and
vales
Romance still walks, a spirit free,
Thrilled by the poet-nightingales:
I turn, dear native land, to thee.

II.

It is not that thy giant floods
Sweep seaward with unrivalled
flow ;
It is not that thy pathless woods
Have majesty no others show ;
Not for thy matchless inland seas,
Wider than eagle's eye discerns,
Nor mountains vast ;—'tis not for
these
My heart, dear land, to thee re-
turns :—

III.

Not for thy seasons, though they
sweep
From unknown continents of ice,
Or, waked in tropic forests deep,
Bring summer from the land of
spice ;
Not that thy fiery forest-trees,
At harvest-close, with splendors
burn
In hues triumphant ;—not for these
To thee, dear land, my steps re-
turn.—

IV.

Not only that my native hearth
Is shrined among thy greenest hills,
Or that my earliest infant mirth
Was learned among thy flowers
and rills,
But, chiefly, that before thee opes
A glorious future, grand and free,
And thou hast all my brightest
hopes,—
For this, dear land, I turn to thee.
To give the words by a maiden sung
After they have passed her tongue,
When more than half of all the grace
Was in her voice and on her face,
Is but to render a cup long drawn,
With all its effervescence gone ;
'Tis but to treasure in after-hours
The garland of faded and dewless
flowers
That in the flood of the banquet-light
Made the wearer's brow more bright.
Had another dared the same to sing,
They had denounced it a rebel thing ;

But from her lips could come no
wrong :
So they praised the singer and the
song.

'Mid those who listened, too rapt to
praise,
Like blossoms that close in the sun's
full blaze,
Folding the ecstasy into the heart
In silence, lest the smallest part
Should exhale on the breath of joy
express,
Stood one, a chance-invited guest,
Half hidden by a curtain's fold,
Too modest and proud to be more
bold,
A youth—the neighboring pastor's
son—
Whose mind and mien had already
won
The wide applause which oft exalts
Till envy finds the virtues faults.
A student he was, with cheeks grown
pale,
Long bleached in that scholastic vale
Where mild-eyed Meditation camps
Among her midnight books and
lamps.

But as he stood and heard her sing,
And gazed with charmed lips apart,
The joy long nestling in his heart
Flew to his cheek on flaming wing.
So feels the prisoner when his cell
Flies open, as by a miracle ;
So glows he, breathing what freedom
yields
That first hour in the summer fields.

Yes ; love, and wonder, and delight,
All three into his breast took flight ;
And those who knew young Edgar
best
Noted the change on his face con-
fessed.

Near by, with scarlet coat and plume,
Like a bonfire in the room,
An officer of the royal troops
Blazed among the admiring groups,
Who, when his eye approval glanced,
Or when he spoke the applauding
word,
Deemed Berkeley's honor was ad-
vanced ;

And, he, too, felt a new delight,
 And deigned from his great warrior
 height
 To stoop, and own his heart was
 stirred.

Outside, in the stars' still light,
 Like a spirit of the night,
 Pressing close to the window-pane,
 With eyes of wonder and mirth in-
 sane,
 There looked a face which shunned
 the gaze,
 Coming and going, as a shadow plays
 When the wind, with rise and fall,
 Sways the elm-shade on the wall.

This with a smile the maiden saw,
 Saw it come and then withdraw;
 And oft they knew not why she
 smiled,

Nor saw the vision strange and wild
 Which she beheld with looks of joy,—
 The frolic-hearted truant boy.

Thus oft beside a delirious child
 The watchers see upon its face
 Expressions which they cannot trace,
 And where its eyes so fondly turn
 They look, but nothing can discern,
 Still conscious of a presence near
 Of what they cannot see or hear.

After the supper and the wine,
 Where flowed the Moselle and the
 Rhine,

And Burgundy and prouder Spain,
 Disputing, held divided reign,—
 For Berkley deemed the worst of faults
 Poor brands, or scant-provided
 vaults,—

Out they sallied into the air;
 And the great white moon was there.
 In merry groups about the green
 They strolled, and praised the night
 serene;

Here the laugh and there the song
 Waked from sleep the feathery throng,
 Nested in the vernal realms
 Of the poplars and the elms.

Their heads unsheathing from the
 wing,

Some, which only the dark makes
 dumb,

Wondered if the dawn had come,—
 The time to deck their plumes and
 sing.

In the grove the whippoorwill
 Forgot his story, and sat still:
 But all who tell a tale of pain
 Know well the place to begin again.

Music on a waveless stream
 Where the stars and moonshine gleam,
 While the light oar noiseless dips,
 And then, lifting, brightly drips,
 As if hung with pearl-strings rare,
 Caught from the water-spirits' hair;
 Then the music-freighted boat
 Seems some fairy ark afloat,
 Filled with groups of airy elves
 Playing to delight themselves,
 Blowing marvellous instruments,
 With a thrill of joy intense,
 Until the sounds that ring afar
 Seem blown from many a clarion star;
 Or as the thin rays of the moon,
 By some marvellous alchemy,
 Were changed from light to melody,
 One-half lustre, one-half tune;
 Or as the veil of the other world
 Were partly lifted, partly furled,
 And underneath the soft notes born
 In the eternal fields of morn
 Were wafted, on the wings of bliss,
 Out of that realm into this.

Such were the sounds there heard to
 flow

From off the winding stream below,—
 Till suddenly a clattering steed
 Dashed up the road in furious speed;
 But soon the checking rein was drawn,
 And now the rider gained the lawn.

And into Berkley's ear apart
 He breathed a word that thrilled his
 heart;

And then from group to group it
 passed,

Quaking the breast from first to last:
 Something about a rebel troop,
 Like an eagle, soon to swoop;
 How some of that obnoxious clan,
 With horrid noise of horn and pan,¹⁰
 Had borne in mockery up and down,

In a rough and jolting car,
 The noisiest Tory of the town,

And only spared the plumes and tar
 Because they deemed the honor due
 To loyalists of deeper hue.

And it was said, and well believed,
 And much the king's supporters
 grieved,

That many a secret rebel band
 Was swiftly forming through the
 land;
 Nor could the wisest well divine
 The object of their full design,
 But knew it much behooved them
 each
 To be prepared or out of reach.
 And—who could tell?—before they
 knew,
 Some lawless and marauding crew—
 None guessed their number or their
 power—
 Might choose in such a festive hour
 To burst into their midst and lay
 A tax which it were hard to pay.

Scarce was the warning heard before
 There was swift mounting at Berkley
 door,
 And jostling hurry down roads of dust,
 As if they fled from a thunder-gust!
 They swept along the highway white,
 Like autumn leaves before the wind
 Which heralds the drowning storm
 behind,
 And round the far hill passed from
 sight.

v.

THE UNWELCOME.

PROUD Berkley, while his arm was
 placed
 Around his daughter's slender waist,
 As up the lawn they swiftly paced,
 Called loudly to his men in haste
 To make the outer gates secure,
 To bar and lock the stable door,
 Then loose the iron kennel-check
 From off the savage mastiff's neck.
 But scarce their feet had pressed the
 floor
 Beside the open entrance-door,
 When still he heard the revelling din
 Of some who drank and laughed
 within.
 Then cried the host, in gayer strain,
 "It seems some lingering guests re-
 main,
 To praise those old Burgundian casks
 Or compliment the Rhenish flasks.

This suits me well. I'll bid them stay
 And revel till the break of day;
 For where such manly mirth is made
 No rebel band will dare invade."

He paced the hall like a generous host,
 And laughed to hear the loud up-
 roar,
 Then cried, as he swung the festive
 door,
 "Fill up, my friends, to a loyal toast!
 Fill high!"—but, at the sight re-
 vealed,
 Some sudden paces backward reeled,
 Like a stunned warrior on the field,
 And stood a moment dumb and lost,
 Like one who meets a midnight ghost.
 Then stammered, "If my sight be
 true,
 This is an honor scarcely due.
 To what may I ascribe, strange sirs,
 The presence of such visitors?"

"To what," cried one, with the voice
 of a gale
 That laughs through an Allegha-
 nian pine,
 "But to drink your health in good
 red wine
 Till its hue returns to your cheek so
 pale?"
 And then the dozen sturdy men
 Laughed, and brimmed their cups
 again,
 And drained them to the hearty toast
 Of Berkley Manor and its host.

'Twas hard to see his dear old wines,
 The heart's blood of the noblest vines,
 Poured by a rough and sunburnt hand
 To nourish the souls of a rebel band.
 He heard the very wine's heart throb
 As it flowed from the flask with a sigh
 and a sob;
 The bubbles that wept around each
 rim
 Looked with imploring eyes at him.

Then swelled that gusty voice once
 more,
 As the speaker rose full six feet four:—
 "That loyal toast you left unsaid,
 To spare your breath, I propose in-
 stead;
 And let the craven, who dares, resist
 To drink the toast of a loyalist!"

Sir Hugh a moment felt relieved :
That word,—perchance he had been
deceived ;

They surely could no rebels be
Who proffered toasts to loyalty.
A goblet into his hand was thrust,
Brimming and dripping, and drink he
must.

“ Here’s to our royal governors,
And every man who such prefers !
May Heaven on their advancement
smile

In their speedy return to their native
isle ! ”

Before his sense the words explained,
The lifted cup was wellnigh drained.
Then burst the intruders’ laughter-
roar,

While stood the host with bewil-
dered brain.

They rose and bowed, and said no
more,

And now behind them slammed the
door ;

He heard them descend the river-
lane

With laugh and song, and all was o’er.
They had come like a sudden burst
of rain,

And, like a gust, withdrew again,—
Their voices dying beyond the lawn,
Like rumbling clouds when the storm
is gone.

Then in chagrin he dashed the glass
Down to the floor, a shattered mass,
And glared thereon, till, laughing,
came,

Queen of the keys, the brave house-
dame,—

A woman tall and somewhat sere,
But, like October, calm and clear ;
Her dark eye still retained its ray,
Her hair its gloss, though touched
with gray.

She cried, “ You had strange guests
to-night,

And such not often you invite
Did but the world know who were
here,

Yours would a rebel name appear.”

To which Sir Hugh, with anger red,
“ May a thousand plagues light on
each head !

I cannot guess what men they be :
I only know they drank my wine :—
Would they might hang, a scare-
crow line,
On the next lightning-blasted tree ! ”

Hulda replied, “ Unless I err,
I heard a voice I have heard before :
Each tone of his is a clinging burr,
That from the memory will not stir.—
Though it is full ten years, or more,
Since last I heard his laughter-roar,
Or his great stride along the floor,
I would know, though twice as long
it were,
Ringbolt, the wilful wagoner.”

Then, in silence and in gloom,
The proud man passed to his private
room,

And paced the floor, in spirit vexed,
With dusky fancies sore perplexed,—
Thought of his daughter, thought of
his pride,

And of a hundred things beside.
But soon o’er his soul of turbulence
The quiet stole, and soothed the sense,
As silence with its hand at last
Smooths the pool where the storm has
passed.

But hark !—was it the rising wind
Swinging the boughs on the window-
blind ?

Or chimney-swallows come anew,
And talking in the sooty cavern,
Conversing as room-mate travellers do
Ere they go to sleep in a wayside
tavern ?

Or was it some burglarious crew,
With many a stealthy gouge and
scratch,
Working their way from screw to
screw,

Mining around the bolt and latch,
With jar and screech, by sure degrees,
Or torturing locks with skeleton keys ?

His heart beat loud : he spake no word,
But seized two pistols and a sword ;
With cautious hand he oped the
door,—

It creaked as it never creaked be-
fore,—

Then descended the stair ; in his soul
he vowed

He never knew them to crack so loud.

At every step he seemed to hear
The noises more distinct and near ;
Now at the pistol-pans he tapped,
And cocked the flints,—how loud they
snapped !—

Then followed the sounds with breath-
less care,

Here encountered a table, and there a
chair,

Till it seemed as if to retard his pace
Each article had changed its place.

The wave of every curtain's fold
Now made his trembling heart less
bold,

Lest, issuing from the midnight air,
His phantom bride should meet him
there,

With wild mysterious eyes to peer
Into his shuddering soul of fear.

But now he gained the parlor door
The noise was louder than before,—
A strange, mad music,—a grate,—a
jar,—

Like a maniac trying to tune a guitar.
By inch and by inch, he opened the
door,

Saw long phantom windows stretch
over the floor,

Made by the moon, and in the full
flood,

Up at the end where the golden harp
stood,

Beheld—and his heart strangely
thrilled at the sight—

The cause of the noises, the source
of his fright.

He gazed with anger mixed with joy,
As he beheld the marvellous boy,—
Anger at the fears unbounded,
Joy that they had proved unfounded :
One long relieving breath he drew,
Then gazed with silent, steadfast view.

Close to the harp the urchin prest
And clasped it fondly to his breast,
Then softly o'er his fingers stirred,
To wake the tones he late had heard ;
Now stopped among the bass per-
plexed,

Then tried the tinkling treble next ;
Now over all his wild hands sped,
And then, despairing, he shook his
head ;

His large eyes, wondering, seemed to
say

The music had gone with the maid
away.

Then he arose, with puzzled air,
And gazed upon the pictures there,
Marvelling much that such things
were,

All so alive, and yet no stir :

And now he climbed into the niche
Where stood the suit of armor rich,
With golden tracery embossed,
And gazed on it in wonder lost,
From head to foot, with searching scan,
Surveyed the marvellous iron man ;
Then, with a hand that nothing feared,
The visor carefully upreared,—

While Berkley saw, with a shudder
of dread,

The horrid yawn of that iron head,—
Looked calmly in, and nothing saw,
Then closed it, having felt no awe.

Methinks to the angel of Peace
'twould be

A charmed and sacred sight to see
A child by an offcast coat of war,
Who dreamed not what 'twas fash-
ioned for.

Heaven send the time when bloody
Mars

Shall only be known among the stars,
And his armor, with its thousand
scars,

In a niche, as a curious thing, be bound,
And peered into, and nothing found !
Oh, would some sweet bird of the
South¹¹

Might build in every cannon's mouth,
Till the only sound from its rusty
throat

Should be the wren's or the blue-
bird's note,

That doves might find a safe resort
In the embrasures of every fort !

Again to the harp the urchin passed,
And sat him down, subdued and
tame,

And seeming overweighed at last,
He leaned against the golden frame ;
His black hair drooped along the
strings,

Like a fainting night-bird's wings ;
A long sigh heaved his tired breast,
And slumber soothed him into rest.

There, like a spirit bright and good,
The guardian moon above him stood :
She kissed his cheeks, caressed his
hair,

And filled with happy dreams the air,
Till the smile which o'er his features
strayed
The pleasure at his heart betrayed.

Sir Hugh approached the sleeping
child,
And stood with wondering thoughts
beguiled.

How beautiful the picture there !—
The gold harp propping the weary
head,

The flashing cords, the shadowy hair,
And over all the moonshine shed !

That slumbering face, it touched his
heart,
And bade the puzzled memories start ;
He had seen it in a dream before,—
A dream long gone, to come no more.

To keep the weary sleeper warm,
He spread a mantle where he lay,
And pressed it softly round his form,
Then turned with noiseless feet
away,
And left him there to dream at
large,
The shadows' and the white moon's
charge.

VI.

THE RISING.

Out of the North the wild news came,
Far flashing on its wings of flame,
Swift as the boreal light which flies
At midnight through the startled
skies.

And there was tumult in the air,
The fife's shrill note, the drum's
loud beat,

And through the wide land every-
where

The answering tread of hurrying
feet,

While the first oath of Freedom's gun
Came on the blast from Lexington.

And Concord, roused, no longer tame,
Forgot her old baptismal name,
Made bare her patriot arm of power,
And swelled the discord of the hour.

The strife was loud, the time was
wild,
When from the sky Heaven's favorite
child,

Sweet Liberty, in joy descended ;
A veil of lightning round her clung,
Whereon the stars of morning hung,
While o'er her head Jove's eagle
swung,
With all his thunderbolts attended.

She came with Victory hand in hand,
Whose flashing eyes and streaming
hair

And gleaming robes and flaming
brand

Shot splendor through the dusky
air,
And gladdened the awakening land.

Wild was the night ; but wilder still
The day which saw those sisters
bright,
In all their beauty and their might,
Hanging above the battle-stroke,
Waving like banners through the
smoke

That veiled the heights of Bunker
Hill.

The field was wellnigh won, when, lo !
From the enraged and reeling foe
Another charge, another blow,

That reached and smote the patriot
chief.

Pale Liberty recoiled a pace,
And for a moment veiled her face ;
While Victory o'er her hero prest,
And wildly wept on Warren's breast
The first tears of her grief.

Alas ! that moment was her cost :—
When she looked up, the field was
lost.

"Lost ? lost ?" she cried. "It shall
not be,

While Justice holds her throne on
high !

By Heaven ! for every martyr dead,
For every sacred drop here shed
From out the brave hearts of the free,
The foe shall doubly bleed and die !"



"The gold harp propping the weary head."

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Such was the voice that fiercely rung
 From brave New England's rocks
 and pines;
 Such were the notes that echo flung
 Far southward, from its clarion
 tongue,
 Through all the Alleghanian lines;
 And every homestead heard the call,
 And one great answer flamed through
 all.

Each sacred hearth-stone, deep and
 wide,
 Through many a night glowed
 bright and full,
 The matron's great wheel at its side
 No more devoured the carded wool,
 And now the maiden's smaller wheel
 No longer felt the throbbing tread,
 But stood beside the idle reel
 Among its idle flax and thread.
 No more the jovial song went round,
 No more the ringing laugh was
 heard;
 But every voice had a solemn sound,
 And some stern purpose filled each
 word

The yeoman and the yeoman's son,
 With knitted brows and sturdy dint,
 Renewed the polish of each gun,
 Re-oiled the lock, reset the flint;
 And oft the maid and matron there,
 While kneeling in the firelight glare,
 Long poured, with half-suspended
 breath,
 The lead into the moulds of death.

The hands by Heaven made silken soft
 To soothe the brow of love or pain,
 Alas! are dulled and soiled too oft
 By some unhallowed earthly stain;
 But under the celestial bound
 No nobler picture can be found
 Than woman, brave in word and deed,
 Thus serving in her nation's need:
 Her love is with her country now,
 Her hand is on its aching brow.

THE BRAVE AT HOME.

I.

The maid who binds her warrior's sash
 With smile that well her pain dis-
 sembles,

The while beneath her drooping lash
 One starry tear-drop hangs and
 trembles,
 Though Heaven alone records the
 tear,
 And Fame shall never know her
 story,
 Her heart has shed a drop as dear
 As e'er bedewed the field of glory!

II.

The wife who girds her husband's
 sword,
 'Mid little ones who weep or wonder,
 And bravely speaks the cheering
 word,
 What though her heart be rent
 asunder,
 Doomed nightly in her dreams to hear
 The bolts of death around him
 rattle,
 Hath shed as sacred blood as e'er
 Was poured upon the field of battle!

III.

The mother who conceals her grief
 While to her breast her son she
 presses,
 Then breathes a few brave words and
 brief,
 Kissing the patriot brow she blesses,
 With no one but her secret God
 To know the pain that weighs upon
 her,
 Sheds holy blood as e'er the sod
 Received on Freedom's field of
 honor!

Within its shade of elm and oak
 The church of Berkley Manor
 stood:
 There Sunday found the rural folk,
 And some esteemed of gentle blood.
 In vain their feet with loitering tread
 Passed 'mid the graves where rank
 is naught:
 All could not read the lesson taught
 In that republic of the dead.

How sweet the hour of Sabbath talk,
The vale with peace and sunshine
full,

Where all the happy people walk,
Decked in their homespun flax and
wool!

Where youths' gay hats with blossoms
bloom;

And every maid, with simple art,
Wears on her breast, like her own
heart,

A bud whose depths are all perfume;
While every garment's gentle stir
Is breathing rose and lavender.

There, veiled in all the sweets that are
Blown from the violet's purple
bosom,

The scent of lilacs from afar,
Touched with the sweet shrub's
spicy blossom,

Walked Esther; and the rustic
ranks

Stood on each side like flowery
banks,

To let her pass,—a blooming aisle,
Made brighter by her summer smile:
On her father's arm she seemed to be
The last green bough of that haughty
tree.

The pastor came; his snowy locks
Hallowed his brow of thought and
care;

And, calmly as shepherds lead their
flocks,

He led into the house of prayer.

Forgive the student Edgar there

If his enchanted eyes would roam,
And if his thoughts soared not be-
yond,

And if his heart glowed warmly
fond

Beneath his hopes' terrestrial dome.

To him the maiden seemed to stand,

Veiled in the glory of the morn,

At the bar of the heavenly bourn,

A guide to the golden holy land.

When came the service' low response,
Hers seemed an angel's answering
tongue;

When with the singing choir she sung,
O'er all the rest her sweet notes
rung,

As if a silver bell were swung

'Mid bells of iron and of bronze.

At times, perchance,—oh, happy
chance!—

Their lifting eyes together met,

Like violet to violet,

Casting a dewy greeting glance.

For once be Love, young Love, for-
given,

That here, in a bewildered trance,
He brought the blossoms of ro-
mance

And waved them at the gates of
heaven.

The pastor rose: the prayer was
strong;

The psalm was warrior David's song;

The text, a few short words of might,—

"The Lord of hosts shall arm the
right!"

He spoke of wrongs too long endured,
Of sacred rights to be secured;

Then from his patriot tongue of
flame

The startling words for Freedom
came.

The stirring sentences he spake

Compelled the heart to glow or quake,

And, rising on his theme's broad wing,

And grasping in his nervous hand

The imaginary battle-brand,

In face of death he dared to fling
Defiance to a tyrant king.

Even as he spoke, his frame, renewed
In eloquence of attitude,

Rose, as it seemed, a shoulder higher;

Then swept his kindling glance of fire

From startled pew to breathless choir;

When suddenly his mantle wide

His hands impatient flung aside,

And, lo! he met their wondering eyes

Complete in all a warrior's guise.¹²

A moment there was awful pause,—

When Berkley cried, "Cease,
traitor! cease!"

God's temple is the house of peace!"

The other shouted, "Nay, not so,

When God is with our righteous
cause:

His holiest places then are ours,

His temples are our forts and towers

That frown upon the tyrant foe:

In this the dawn of Freedom's day

There is a time to fight and pray!"

And now before the open door—

The warrior-priest had ordered so—
The enlisting trumpet's sudden soar
Rang through the chapel, o'er and o'er,

Its long reverberating blow,
So loud and clear, it seemed the ear
Of dusty death must wake and hear.
And there the startling drum and fife
Fired the living with fiercer life;
While overhead, with wild increase,
Forgetting its ancient toll of peace,

The great bell swung as ne'er before :
It seemed as it would never cease ;
And every word its ardor flung
From off its jubilant iron tongue
Was, "WAR! WAR! WAR!"

"Who dares"—this was the patriot's
cry,

As striding from the desk he came—

"Come out with me, in Freedom's
name,

For her to live, for her to die?"

A hundred hands flung up reply,

A hundred voices answered, "I!"

VII.

THE WREATH.

How sweet it is when day is new,
And Summer is bathed in her young
dew,

To contemplate, 'twixt sun and sod,
Each miracle that tells of God!

Thus Edgar mused in dreamy mood,
Next morn, on the upland solitude,
As, slowly pacing, he gained the site
Of the one great oak that crowned
the height.

He threw him on a mossy mound,
His whole soul flooded with the
sense

Of that delightful recompense
Which ever in the fields is found,
Which lifts the heart when tempest-
bowed,

And sets the rainbow on the cloud.
He saw the river where it flowed
Under the morn, a golden road,—
Saw ships upon that highway free
Moving out to a boundless sea.
He saw the mist-dispelling sun
Mount, proudly conscious there was
none

Septred beside himself, to hold
High state upon that throne of gold,
And thought of Freedom's glorious
light

Conquering the dull mists of night.
He saw the moon with anxious stare
Walk down the cloudless western
air,

Seeking the stars with pale dismay,

Like a shepherdess whose flocks

From the fields have gone astray

Among dusky woods and rocks,

In the wilderness to roam,

Till the eve shall bring them home.

But he thought decaying Tyranny

Might search for his lost flock in
vain.

Those stars now seeking to be free

No gloomy eve should bring again.

Long, long he gazed on Berkley Hall,

And then on his native cottage
small,—

The one embowered in tall, proud
trees,

The one with its woodbine porch and
bees;

And never before they struck his sense
With such a hopeless difference.

He felt how often heart from heart
Are kept by the mason's walls apart,
Even though the doors were open, free,
As Wealth can afford his doors to be.

Gliding along the garden-walks,
Gathering blossoms from the stalks,
He saw the heiress of Berkley Hall,
And fancied he heard the rise and fall
Of the melody he knew must be
Flooding her lips incessantly :

For song was native to her tongue

As to a rannel valeward flung,

As wind to a cloud, as mist to a fall,

As dew to the rose, and as sunshine
to all.

His full heart ached with love's sweet
pain,

Like a sealed fountain, charged with
rain,

That longs to sing in the summer air,
Yet faints in its cavern of despair.

From plot to bower, from vase to vase,
Down to the very garden-base,

He watched her gliding, fawnlike
pace;

The branches bowed to her forehead
 fair
 And shed their blooms on her golden
 hair.

Oh, what is so like an embodied
 May
 As a frolic maiden, with laughter
 gay,
 Chasing her fancies as they flit
 Out of her heart of innocent wit,
 Shrining herself in the blowing
 bowers,
 Her tresses flecked with falling
 flowers?

O Heaven, when I am old and bent
 And into the valley deathward sent,
 Be the last sweet vision which charms
 my way
 A breathing, bright, embodied May,
 That, while I lean upon my staff,
 I may see her smile and hear her
 laugh,
 That my heart may be fresh, till its
 life is null,
 With the sun and the dew of the
 beautiful!

A tree blown bright with summer
 blooms,
 O'errun with honeysuckle-vines,
 A very fount of sweet perfumes,
 Stood in the garden, where the bees
 Toiled ever in these murmurous
 mines:
 And Edgar might have envied these;
 For some which mined that odorous
 store
 Brought back their sweets to his
 father's door.

Around this tree a stair-way led
 Into the branches overhead,
 And there, 'mid spreading antler-
 boughs,
 A little room was fitted well,
 Where a votaress might make her
 vows
 Secure within her flowery cell.

Such a one there stands to-day
 In a poet's garden far away,
 Where on many an afternoon,
 His great soul full of marvellous tune,
 Cloistered among flowers and leaves,
 He sings, and all the world receives.

Lightly up the vine-like stair,
 Light of heart and light of foot,
 Flitted the maiden into the bower.
 Never in enchanted air
 Held a vine so fair a flower
 Or tree so sweet a fruit.

She sat; the flickering sun and shade
 Like wingéd sprites about her played:
 The wren peered in with curious eye,
 The bluebird carolled closely by,
 The robin from her nest above
 Looked, and resumed her task of love.

The maiden's lap was full of flowers,
 Culled from the lavish garden-bowers.
 'Mid these her fingers gayly played
 Entwining happy shade with shade,
 And, as she wrought the flowers
 among,
 Her sweet thoughts rippled into song.

I.

The blue-eyed lady of the morn,
 While she wreathes her flowers of
 light,
 Knows for whom those flowers are
 bright,
 By whom they shall be worn:
 She knows the golden locks of Day
 Shall bear that flashing wreath away.

II.

Though she knows their shape and
 hue
 May be crushed and tarnished soon,
 And the battle-heat of noon
 Waste their precious dew,
 Yet she knows when Day is through
 He shall wear his wreath anew.

III.

Would I knew some hero now!
 He should wear the wreath I make.
 Not for mine, but Freedom's sake,
 I would deck his brow:
 Should his arm victorious prove,
 He should wear the wreath of love.

IV.

Should he fall, I would outgrieve
 All who ever grief possessed ;
 I would weep upon his breast,
 Overveiled like dewy eve,
 And above my hero dead
 Pour my tears till life had fled.

The music on its golden wing
 Dropt from those dewy lips of spring :
 Scarce had the cadence ceased to flow,
 There was a sound of footsteps
 fleet,

And suddenly, with cheeks aglow,
 Young Edgar knelt before her feet.
 She started with surprise—not fear—
 To find the stranger youth so near.
 He read the question in her eye,
 And, ere she spoke, he made reply :—

“ Oh, lady, if I err, forgive :
 I know not, scarcely, if I live,
 Or that it is my soul is drawn
 By witching music, on and on,
 To kneel to thee in holier guise,
 While its poor dwelling yonder lies !
 I was as one within a land

Where all he sees is dead and sere,
 Who droops with thirst, till near at
 hand

He hears a fountain singing clear,
 Then, without further question, flies
 To find the spring which life supplies.
 In sooth, the music drew me near,
 And left me, lady, kneeling here.
 I heard the wish your song expressed,
 And echo answered in my breast.
 Oh, bid me wear that wreath you
 make,
 For thine as well as Freedom’s sake !”

The maiden’s lips no word replied ;
 But still the youth could well de-
 sery

That there was pleasure in her eye
 And that her cheek was double-dyed.

A moment, with extended hands,
 She held the precious wreath in air,
 Looked in his face her sweet com-
 mands,

Then pressed it on her hero’s hair,
 And would have fled with girlish
 bound,
 But suddenly a whirring sound

Made her light foot recoil a pace,
 And drove the roses from her face.

A wingéd arrow fiercely near
 Had lightly grazed the stranger’s ear,
 Dislodged one garland-bloom, and
 sunk

Quivering in the gnarléd trunk,
 And firmly there the angry dart
 Transfixed the blossom’s odorous
 heart.

Her flashing eye the maiden turned :
 One hurried glance the truth dis-
 cerned.

Near by, upon the gravel path,
 Holding his attitude of wrath,
 The wild-eyed boy defiant stood.
 His black hair in a flashing flood
 Flung back, the quivering bow’s ad-
 vance,

The right hand to the shoulder
 drawn,

The knitted brow, the fiery glance
 Still following where the dart had
 gone,—

He looked the great Apollo’s child,
 Born in a forest dark and wild.

A moment thus his posture kept
 The young soul burning in his face,
 Then suddenly, as in disgrace,
 He flung him on the grass and wept.

Her heart was moved, her pity stirred :
 She fled to him as flies a bird

Which hears its lonely fledgling call ;
 She raised his head, smoothed back

his hair,
 Looked in his eyes of wild despair.

He smiled, and she forgave him all,
 Then led him calmly up the lawn,
 Glanced at the bower,—the youth was
 gone.

Young Edgar passed the garden-gate
 With dazzled brain and heart elate ;
 The very landscape seemed to quiver,
 As if the burning pulse of love
 Was throbbing in the sky above,
 Thrilling the forest, field, and river.

His spirit’s wings had sudden birth ;
 He felt beneath no heavy earth :
 He trod as on a field of air,
 And the flowers like stars shone every-
 where.

Down through the grove he gained
the stream,
Which flowed before him like a dream,
Its ripples whispering to the shore,
And love their burden evermore ;
Stream, flower, and tree, and breeze,
and bird,
Were eloquent with that one word.

He knelt, with very joy o'erweighed,
Beneath a flowering poplar's shade,
And seized the coronal and kissed

The blossoms (Love must have
his will),

And held them to his lips until
His eyes were full of blissful mist,
Through which the bright scene
brighter shone

In iris colors all his own.

Then solemnly the flowers he prest
Beneath the crossed hands on his
breast,

And cried, "In face of Death and
Heaven,

This sacred wreath by thee was given,
And it shall not dishonored be !

Here, in face of Heaven and Death,
I pledge my life, my latest breath,
To Freedom and to thee !"

"A valiant oath,—and nobly sworn !"

Exclaimed a voice of thunder near ;

"And, if it be no idle boast,
Go forth to-day, and take your post:
For hark ! 'tis Freedom's bugle-horn
Which summons you from here !

"Mount yonder steed,—unless I err,
He will not wait for whip or spur,—
And I have one as good beside.
'Tis well : we both have far to ride."

The youth sprang up. The speaker's
height

Loomed o'er him like a cloud of
night :

The palm on Edgar's shoulder flung
In friendship, wellnigh made him
reel :

The pledging right hand ached and
stung,

Grasped in the wagoner's grip of
steel.

"Our place of secret rendezvous,"
He said, "is only known to few,—

A cavern in a wild ravine,
Hid by the friendly oak and vine,
Where naught is heard but the
Brandywine,
Which rolls a shadowy flood between ;
A hidden place, that well might be
The stronghold of a robber crew :
Of such persuasion are not we,
Save in our royal tyrant's view.

"Your guide I cannot be to-day ;
My course lies far another way ;
But there is one will guide you true :
Already, with a heart of joy,
By yonder wall he waits for you,
Henceforth your friend,—the frolic
boy.

Mount you, and place the youth be-
hind,—

The wildest steed may carry
double,—

And in the holsters you will find
Two trusty guards in case of trouble.

"And when you meet the wild-eyed
dame

Who reigns within our secret place,
If she looks strangely in your face,
Speak kindly,—simply name my
name,—

That my command has brought you
hence ;

No further it behooves to know :
'Twere well you give her no offence :
She may be— Well, no matter :
go."

They parted, and the youth obeyed,
And when the friendly evening laid
Concealment over rock and wave,
He gained the river and the cave.¹³

PART II.

I.

THE YOUNG PATRIOT.

THREE years the flying sun and shade
O'er Berkley Hall their change had
cast,
Since the wild urchin and the maid
Within its loyal portal passed.

Two years the invader's war-alarms
 Had waked the land, which still
 defied,
 And oft the gleam of patriot arms
 From Berkley's turret was descried.

Upon his central roof a tower
 Rose and o'erlooked the country
 wide,—
 A place scarce fit for lady's bower ;
 For there was seen, on every side,
 Many a cast-off coat of war,
 Helmet and sword, with hack and
 scar,
 With guns and pistols crosswise hung,
 O'er which the dust of years was flung.

And there through many a changeful
 hour
 The anxious father and the maid
 Through telescopic glass surveyed
 The impending cloud of battle lower ;
 They watched it move o'er land and
 stream,
 They saw the white sails come and
 go,
 And all the flashing splendor gleam
 Along the bristling plains below.

There had they gazed through one
 long day,
 Watching an army glide away
 Beyond the city's western side,—
 So far, the line was scarce descried ;
 But Esther knew a nation's trust
 Marched there in that long cloud of
 dust.

"Thank Heaven!" the loyalist ex-
 claimed,
 "They are gone!—our city is re-
 claimed,
 And England's banner now may fly,
 To gladden every loyal eye!"

But now a voice, like a clarion clear,
 Rang laughing in the speaker's ear :—
 "I saw him! and your vaunt is
 vain :
 I saw him and his warrior train :
 Had you beheld that hero host,
 Your fears had not allowed the boast."

Who dared in Berkley's presence
 proud
 Speak rebel words so fierce and loud ?

Sir Hugh his hand in anger laid
 Upon the handle of his blade ;
 But when he saw the wild-eyed boy,
 And gazed upon his face of joy,
 The vengeance in his breast was
 stayed.

Then, with a tremor on his tongue,
 While something paler grew his
 cheek,
 As some retarding memory clung
 On the rebuke he fain would speak,
 He said, "Rash boy, beware! beware!
 You put my kindness to the proof.
 Is it for this my three years' care
 Has sheltered you beneath my roof?
 Is it for this—" He said no more :
 He saw the tear, the brow of pain,—
 A look which he had seen before,
 And one he would not see again.

"Nay, Ugo, nay!" the maiden cried,
 Her two hands clasping his be-
 tween ;
 Her tender eyes to his replied,
 And straightway all his troubled
 mien
 Grew bright, as when the iris form
 Glows on the cloud that threatened
 storm.
 "Nay, Ugo, nay: speak out, and
 say
 The things which you have seen to-
 day."

"Him have I seen," the boy ex-
 claimed,
 "Yes, him!—what needs he to be
 named?
 The world has only one broad sun,
 And Freedom's world but Washing-
 ton."

Even while he spake that fiery word,
 The stripling's stature seemed to
 grow ;
 All his young hero spirit stirred
 Sent to his cheek the warrior glow :
 Save the same look, which knew no
 awe,
 Learned on his native mountains
 wild,
 You scarcely longer saw the child
 Which thrice a twelvemonth past you
 saw.

"Him have I seen!—oh, sight to cheer

The patriot when he bleeding lies,
To kindle hope and scatter fear,
And light new fire in dying eyes!

"His way with banners waved and burned;

The welkin rang with patriot cheers;
From every window fondly yearned
Bright eyes that spoke their joy in tears.

"And music round his pathway flung
Its gladness in a silver shower,
And over all the great bells swung,
Shouting their joy from every tower.

"The snow-white war-horse he bestrode

Stept conscious, with a soul of flame,
As if he knew his master rode
Straight to the glorious gates of Fame.

"The coldest gazer's heart grew warm,

And felt no more its indecision;
For every soul which saw that form
Grew larger to contain the vision.

"I watched the long, long ranks go by,¹⁴

And saw defiance in every eye;
And every soldier true and stanch
Wore in his cap a vernal branch,
As Victory had placed it there
For Fame to twine about his hair.

"Oh, how the wild heart sent its blood

Through all the frame, a throbbing flood,

To see those spirits, true and tried,
Who crossed at night the roaring tide,

What time the grinding gulfs of ice

Made all the desperate peril thrice,
When nothing but a patriot's fire
Could breast the winter's bitter ire,—
Who barefoot trod December's snow,
And took the hirelings at a blow!

"You should have seen that stream of life

Westward go and eastward come,
Thrilled and cheered by the startling life,
Throbb'd through and through by many a drum.

"There, on his charger fierce and tall,

A fiery stallion black as night,
His bold front overtopping all,—
A very tower along the right,—
With eye that death could not deter,
His rifle o'er his shoulder flung,
Two pistols in his holsters hung,
Rode Ringbolt, the wild wagoner.

"They who have seen that mighty hand,

And heard the swearing of his whip,
May well conceive the giant grip
That wielded the commanding brand.

"There, like a son by his warrior sire,

And mounted on a steed as good,
His eye aflame with patriot fire,
His cheek aflush with patriot blood,
Rode Edgar, and the leaves of green
Set in his cap had a rose between;
I knew not what the intent might be:
Perchance 'twas there for memory.

"And after these a hundred more,
Obedient to the wagoner's word,

As fierce a band as ever bore
Through fire and flood the avenging sword.

These were his 'mountain eagles,'—
these,

So often seen a flying cloud
That sweeps the hills through forest-trees,

Following their leader loud,—

A cloud whose form
Is a whirlwind storm,
When on the flanks
Of the foeman's ranks

It breaks from upland covert near,
And pours its sudden bolts of wrath,

Then gains anew the secret path
Ere it is said, 'The storm is here!'

Pale wonder strikes the columns wide,
And, ere the foe can count his slain,

Thundering down the other side
The swooping tempest strikes again.

"But yesterday I heard their tramp,
And saw their chargers dashing
down,
Each wild mane like a banner
blown:
They swam the river, leapt the
creek,
And o'er the near hills gained the
camp,
Bearing the news from Chesapeake."

So spake the youth. The maid near by
Sat gazing in his clear, dark eye,
As if she saw in its depths, anew,
The whole bright pageant passing
through.

But Berkley frowned his blackest
frown,

As that would put the rebel down,
And cried, "Well, sir, and is this all?"

The picture you would have us view
Is rare, and colored somewhat new:
Methinks 'twere easier to recall

That barefoot, tattered, hungry
crew

Quartered but now near Berkley Hall.

The farmers' planted fields forlorn

Will make a poor return of corn,

And thievish birds wax fat, I fear,

Since all the scarecrows volunteer!"

And he laughed the bitter laugh of
scorn,

So grating to a patriot's ear.

"You know so well how a rebel feels
Fresh from his sty of mire and
straw,

While dangling, tangling 'twixt his
heels

Is dragged the sword he dares not
draw:

Gird on this brand, and let us see
The brave young rebel you would
be!"

So speaking, he took from its place
of dust

A blade whose scabbard was thick
with rust:—

"And this chapeau, for many a year
Untouched among the cobwebs here,—
The webs may serve you yet for lint;

This ancient gun,
With rust o'errun,—

It matters not the loss of flint;

A pistol or so to grace your side;
This old flask, too:—be naught denied
To deck you in your warrior pride!
Behold you now! By Heaven, you
stand

As fair a rebel as walks the land!"

Again the bitter laugh was flung
From off the old man's scornful
tongue.

The youth a moment glared in doubt,
Reddening like one who stands at
bay;

But presently burst his laughter-
shout,

And, crying, "Then be it as you
say!"

Wildly sprang from the tower
away.

They heard him descend the echoing
stair,

And Berkley stood with wondering
air,

Listening with wide eyes and lips,
Like a traveller on Vesuvius' top

When his adventurous hand lets
drop

A stone into the yawning pit:

From rock to rock he hears it flit,

Till the noises die in a far eclipse.

But, when the clattering sounds were
past,

Sir Hugh stood with the look aghast
Of a sire who has held his favorite
boy,

In frolic, only to fright and annoy,
Over a precipice wild and deep,

When, with a sudden and desperate
leap,

The child is gone! and the father
stands,

Stunned and staring, with empty
hands.

II.

RUST ON THE SWORD.

O HAPPY and secure retreat,
Dear Valley, home of many friends!

I envy even the hurried feet
Which fancy through your quiet
sends!

There led of old the Cambrian swain
His flock by flowery brook and
rill,

Flinging across the summer plain
The song he learned on Snowdon's
hill,—

Perchance some fragmentary strain
Of ancient Merlin's wizard skill.

His language now no longer breathes
Its strange, wild music through the
scene,

But here and there a name still
wreathes

His memory in perpetual green.
Tredyffrin, Caln, and Nantmeal hold
Traditions of those sires of old ;
While Uwchlan, in her inmost vale,
May hear at eve some Cambrian tale.

Though many a brave ancestral name
Has, starlike, in the distance set,
Still thou hast others dear to Fame,
Forgetful Time shall not forget,—
Bright memories which shall long re-
main

Cherished by every patriot breast,—
That of the calm-browed painter
West,

And his, the fiery-hearted Wayne ;
And in thy scientific bowers
Are those which fear nor frost nor
sun :

There, written with immortal flowers,
Are found such names as Darlington.

Nor dost thou need my hand to fling
The poet's offering on thy shrine :—
Among thy vales sweet minstrels sing
Like thine own flashing Brandy-
wine.

From Kennet, Taylor's soaring strain
Rings like a silver bugle round,
As if on that near battle-plain
Some herald's clarion he had found.

'Twas midnight in the secret cave,
Darkness and silence reigning, save
The dreary muttering of the brands
That flickered where a caldron
hung ;

While dreaming near, with folded
hands,

A woman sat, no longer young :—
No longer young,—or rather say
Her first youth only passed away.

Her hair, as by a wind thrown back,
Was glossy still, and thick and black ;
Her brow was clear, save where the
brain

Had set its outward seal of pain.

Her cheek was tanned, her eye was
bright

With something of unearthly light.
A string of mingled bead and shell,
Which seemed of woodland life to tell,
Entwined her head, and round her
waist

A costly wampum belt was placed ;
While on her tawny neck and arm
Hung amulet and bracelet charm.
Her robes of mingled cloth and fur
With beads and quills embroidered
were :

And thus in her wild forest dress
She looked an Indian prophetess,
With still a something in her face,
And something in her slender mien,
Beyond the finest savage grace
That ever marked a chieftain's
queen.

There sat she gazing, dreamy-eyed,
As if within the flame she spied
Visions of scenes long past and gone,
Or some strange pleasure yet to dawn.
But now her quick ear caught a
sound,—

A stealthy footfall drawing near :
A light hare tripping o'er the ground
Would wake her eye, but not her
fear :

Still through the leaves it came
more clear,—

Her hand was on the rifle laid,
Her quick glance pierced the cavern's
shade ;

But soon the well-known whisper
came,

Giving the watchword and her name :
"Hist, Nora !—hist ! 'tis I!"—she
bade

Young Ugo enter undismayed.

A moment in his laughing eye
She gazed, then scanned his strange
attire :

His figure brightened by the fire,
His shadow looming darkly high,
The sword, the gun, the pistols, hat,—
With questioning look she stared
thereat.

"Say, Ugo, say, where was the theft?
What loyalist have you bereft?"

"No theft," the boy indignant cried,
"But gift of one who bade me don
These rebel arms, and urged me on,
Until, to please him, I complied;
But who, or where, or when, or how,
The question matters little now.
Come, Nora,—you were ever good,—
I only ask a little food,
And then your helping hand to-night
To make this old sword somewhat
bright;

While on these pistols I renew
The polish which is still their due,
And from the gun remove the crust
Of honorable dust and rust;
For well I know the time is near—
The scene, too, not o'er far from
here—

When every weapon we can wield
Shall be most dear to Freedom's
field."

She gave him food with generous
hand,
And then essayed to cleanse the
brand;
And, while she wrought the blade
along,
She cheered her toiling hand with
song.

SONG.

I.

Oh, sweet is the sound of the shuttle
and loom
When the lilies of peace fill the land
with perfume!
Then cheerily echoes the axe from the
hill,
While the bright waters sing on the
wheel of the mill,
And the anvil rings out like a bell
through the day,
And the wagoner's song cheers his
team on the way,
Till the bugles sound here, and the
drums rattle there,
And the banners of War stream afar
on the air.

II.

Then wild is the hour, and fearful the
day,
When the shuttle is dropt for the
sword and the fray,
When the woodman is felling a foe at
each stroke,
And the miller is blackened with
powder and smoke,
When the smith wields the blade in
his terrible grip,
And the wagoner's rifle cracks true
as his whip:
The bugles sound here, and the drums
rattle there,
While the banners of War stream
afar on the air.

III.

Our brave-hearted yeomen,—our lords
of the soil,—
They reap where they sow the reward
of their toil;
In the broad field of labor their harvest
is blithe,
Their favorite arms the plough, sickle,
and scythe:
The plough and the sickle, the scythe
and the flail,—
These, these are their weapons, with
these they prevail,
Till the bugles sound here, and the
drums rattle there,
And the banners of War stream afar
on the air.

IV.

Then the plough-horse is mounted,
and flies o'er the plain,
The blade is flung by in the grass or
the grain,
And the hand that grew strong on
the flail or the plough,
And battled alone with the harvest
till now,
The rifle and sword can as steadily
wield,
Till the harvest of foemen is swept
from the field;
While the bugles sound here, and the
drums rattle there,
And the banners of War stream afar
on the air.

V.

Be God on our side in the season of
dread !

Be His strength with the living, His
peace with the dead ;

His love shield the widow and orphan,
His care

Soothe the parents whose sorrow shall
whiten their hair ;

Be success with the right when the
struggle is through,

And the sword be returned to the
ploughshare anew,

And no bugle sound here, and no
drum rattle there,

While the banners of Peace stream
afar on the air !

Thus, singing strenuously, she toiled
To cleanse the blade which Time had
soiled.

The dull stains clung unto the steel,
As they were spots of murderous
red

Whose stubborn hue must needs re-
veal

The crime when first that blood
was shed.

She knelt before the midnight flame,
Which seemed to leap with pleas-
ure new :

She gazed,—a chill ran through her
frame

As if a spectre met her view :
She saw the Berkley arms and name
Slow struggling through the veil of
rust,

Then swooned, and sank into the dust.

But Ugo's aid was instant there :

He raised her head upon his knee,
Called her by name, smoothed back
her hair,

Looked with a face of mute despair
On hers of pallid agony.

At length a breath came full and
deep,

And then, as one who walks in sleep
And sees with large unwavering eyes
Through veils of awful mysteries,
She stared, and sighed, " O Heaven !
'tis done !—

Where fought the two there stands
but one :"

Then passed her hand across her brow,
And looked in the o'erbending face,
Which still its pitying posture kept :—

" O Ugo, do not leave me now !"
She groaned. " It is a dreary
place !"

Then bowed her head and wept.

" Go, lay her on her couch apart !"
The deep voice made the hearers start.
She choked the tears back to her heart,
And mounted like a wounded deer
That hears its calling comrade near.

" Good Nora, we have much to do,"
Said Ringbolt, " yet no need of you.
Our eagle troop will soon be here :
They tether now their horses near.
The boy our sentinel watch can keep,
So to your couch awhile and sleep.

" Unless the storm should pass, or
pause,
Which hangs in thunder o'er the
land,

Ere set of many suns, your hand
May do good service in our cause.

" All night the well-piled fire must
glow,
All night the molten lead be
poured,
Our guns recleaned, resharped the
sword,

In honor of the approaching foe ;
And if it be, as beldams say,
The devil feasts when tyrants fall,
Let his infernal board straightway
Be spread, with room enough for
all !"

III.

A BURIAL.

ROUND all the wide horizon's bar
There lay no growing cloud to mar
The brightness of the autumn day ;
And yet the soft air felt the jar
Of thunder rolling from afar,¹⁵
And shuddered in its pale dismay.

Berkley, with anxious eye and ear,
Stood on the southern porch to hear,
Disturbed with many a doubt and fear,
As rolled the distant roaring in ;

Then to his tower he mounted high,
And searched through all the cloud-
less sky:

All, all was clear, while still came
by

The rumble of the constant din.

Was direful war the sudden source?
Was it for this the rebel force
Had ta'en but now their southward
course?

The sound his fears too well define!
It is, it is the cannon's mouth!

Its awful answer from the south
Bears tidings of the roaring ranks
That crash upon the trembling banks,
The crimson banks, of Brandywine.

Pale Esther, in that gloomy tower,
Strained her sad vision's fruitless
power:

On every sound she seemed to hear
The shout and groan together swell;
At every burst that came more clear,
She deemed her hero Edgar fell,—
Fell, and perchance had breathed his
last

Long ere the death-announcing blast,
Speeding through miles of frightened
air,

His dying sigh to her could bear.

Still hearkening, gazing far abroad,
Some sign of triumph to discover,
All day she poured her prayer to God
To shield her country and her lover.

And Berkley, listening to the fight,
Remembered Trenton's direful night,
And that it was the same fierce train

Whose lengthy line he saw of late
Pour from the city o'er the plain,
Led by a leader bold and great,
Who now upon that roaring field
Might cause once more their flag to
yield.

His heart, misgiving, sank away,
Shuddering through the doubtful
day:

And should the rebels win, what
then?—

The troops were bold and desperate
men:

And he remembered with affright
The terrors of that startling night

What time a rude and lawless crew
(All such he deemed the patriot
lines)

Intruded on his midnight view
And drank his dearest, noblest
wines:

His frame was agued through and
through
Lest that wild scene should come
anew.

“Ho! gardener, hostler, coachman!—
ho!

Each man whose hand can wield a
spade!

A place of safety must be made:
Bring shovels, hoes, and picks, and
show

How you can ply the digging trade.”
When Berkley's will was thus con-
veyed,

Down came the gardener and his
man,

The hostler and the hostler's lad,
The coachman and the footman ran,
And each his delving orders had.

“Dig me a pit!” the master cried,
“And let it be both deep and wide,
As 'twere a grave that might contain
A score or more of rebels slain.
But they for whom this grave is made
Belong unto a nobler grade,
With better blood than ever ran
In purple veins of outlaw clan.
Their royal genealogic lines
Come down the Old World's antique
vines:

Ho, butler! my good sacristan,
Bear out our monarch king of vines,
Old Port, in all his purple pride,
With queenly Sherry at his side,
Followed by all their loyal train,
The brave, light-hearted German
knights

Whose birth was on the Rhenish
heights,

The well-beloved of Charlemagne,
And all those maids whose bright
eyes' glance

In memory of their native France.
Here, give them to their parent mould
Till peace has stilled this rebel
strife;

Then doubly bright and doubly bold
Shall be their renovated life.”

Sir Hugh, thus making mournful
mirth,

That poorly cloaked his trembling
fear,—

It may be with a secret tear,—
Consigned his precious wines to earth :
'Twas midnight ere they smoothed
away

All traces where his treasures lay.

'Twas midnight, and a moon in
heaven,

And silence over stream and hill,
Save where the lone bird's song was
given,

Or aspens, with a whispering thrill,
Seemed sheltering some young wind
benighted,

Late from the battle-field affrighted.
The moon which through the window
gazed

Saw Esther 'gainst her harp re-
clining,

Her pale and prayerful face upraised,
And each eye with a tear-drop
shining.

Her prophet-heart foreboding well
The fate which to that field befell,
Her fingers trembled on the string,
And thus her prayerful song took
wing.

SONG.

I.

O God, o'er all this blooming earth
Is it with thine approving eye
That every flower of noble birth
Must bow to poisonous weeds, or
die?

II.

Through all our pastures must there
run

The bramble which no fruitage
bears?

Must every field which loves the sun
Be arrogant with choking tares?

III.

Must every tree whose leaves divine
Were made in Freedom's air to
spread,

Be clasped by the obnoxious vine
Until its boughs are sapped and
dead?

IV.

Wilt thou not send some mighty hand
To sweep through these entangled
walks,

To root the proud weeds from the land
And burn the rank and thorny
stalks?

A moment now she paused, and
sighed,

Her hand still on the quivering
cords,

As waiting the ensuing words,
When, at the open casement wide,
A voice in patriot tones replied :—

"Yes, God hath sent that arm of
wrath:

It sweeps the land with sword of
fire:

The poisonous weeds but strew his
path

To build Oppression's funeral
pyre!"

Sweet is the sound when pardon calls
The prisoner from his dreary walls:
And sweet the succoring voice must be
Which hails a sinking ship at sea;
And dear the water's light when first
It greets the desert-pilgrim's thirst,
Or from the friendly helmet drips
To cool a fainting patriot's lips:
But not more sweet or dear than when
A fond heart hears and meets again
The voice and the responding eye
Of one, the dearest 'neath the sky,
Whom picturing fancy saw but now
With drooping head and bleeding
brow,

Or heard the last-drawn sigh of pain
Which laid him with his comrades
slain:

Her arm was round her hero prest,
Her head was on his happy breast.

IV.

THE FIGHT AT THE FORD.

WHEN passed the first wild burst of joy,—

That bliss which harbors no alloy,—
The maiden brushed aside the tear,

And sighed, "Oh, Edgar, is it true?

And are you living, breathing here,
Or is't a phantom cheats my view,

And leads me up this happy brink
To plunge me deeper when I sink?

Art sure that from the dreadful fray
You brought no bleeding wound away?

Thank Heaven that fainting prayer
can win

Its way above the battle-din!

But tell me what great deeds were done,

How the red waves were backward tossed

Until the glorious field was won——"

"Alas!" he answered, "it was lost!

And we retreat,—so deems the foe;
But soon his bleeding ranks shall know

'Tis but the arrow drawing back
Upon the stubborn-bending bow,

To deal a fiercer, deadlier blow

When vengeance speeds it on its track.

"But how shall I describe the fray?

How word the horrors of the day

To suit a timid maiden's ear?

In sooth, the scenes are yet too near:

The roaring cannon and the strife,

With all those whirling ranks of life,
Sweep through my brain, a puzzled

maze,

Confused within a cloudy haze:

It seems a wild and broken dream,

With transitory glimpse and gleam

Of grappling groups, of bayonets' quiver,

Of flashing guns and sabre-stroke,

Caught through the openings of the smoke

Upon some visionary river.

"Wrapt in a friendly cloud of mist,

At morn the wagoner led us out,

And, following our bold leader's shout,

We put the pickets off to rout,
Oft trampling down a scouting list,

And oft upon the foeman's flanks

We dealt the blow their startled ranks

Scarce knew where to resist.

"For hours we sailed from rear to front,

And down their side, from front to rear:

Death and confusion paid the brunt

Wherever we came near.

Anon was heard the opening roar

Which called us to the bristling shore;

And now the fearful scene was won

Where deadly gun replied to gun,

And pistol answered pistol flash,

And then the fiery, sudden dash

Of hand to hand, and sword to sword,

While in the stream, with plunge and splash,

Though thrice our number on us poured,

We dealt the thick foe crash for crash,
And strove to hold the ford.

"Now was the time you should have seen

Bold Ringbolt with his towering mien;

Have heard his voice, have seen his blow

Which drove the heavy weapon home,

Each stroke of which unhorsed a foe,
And sent him reeling red below,

'Mid trampled waters crushed to foam.

But, oh, it would have touched your pride

Could you have seen at Ringbolt's side
Our standard-bearer, young and bold,

Fighting and grasping in his hold

The banner whose unsullied fold

The foeman's rage defied!

"But, sad to see, and sad to tell,

Brave Ugo's horse beneath him fell,

The banner-boy went down.

A moment,—shall the horses' tread

Deal death upon his struggling head?

A moment,—shall he drown?

No!—Ringbolt from his saddle leaps,
His mighty arm is round him cast,
But still his fighting posture keeps,
His blows fly strong and fast.

"The rider who survives must grieve
That ere his brave steed strove to
cleave

With rearing hoof that skull apart,
He fell an instant carcass slain,
Hewed wellnigh through from throat
to mane,

Or gashed unto the heart.

"No arm with that great arm could
cope,

Whether or foot or fiery horse;
But now, as with a tiger's force
When battling to protect its young,
Upon his steed again he sprung,
While in his hold the boy still
hung,

And grasping, as with grip of
death,

The reins between his angry teeth,
To give his right arm clearing scope,
There still his blade of battle swung,
And on the pressing foemen flung
The blow that to the invaders rung
The knell of many a hero's hope.

"At last the overwhelming tide
Of foemen pressed us slowly back;
We did not turn, we did not slack
Our heavy blows, or ever flinch,
But, slowly backing, inch by inch,
We gained the other side.

But now was heard the roaring din
Of Wayne's artillery pouring in;
And while its iron torrent flowed,
Leaving the foe enough to do,
Along the highway we withdrew,
To breathe a little, and reload.

"When Ugo wakened from his swoon,
Gathering his scattered senses soon,

He sought the banner of his pride;
He looked through all the busy
band,

And stared upon his empty hand,
Then cast his eagle glances wide.

'Oh, death! oh, infamy!' he cried:
He saw it on the other side,
Beneath the invader's standard tied,
Heavily hanging, wet and tame,
Weeping as 'twere in grief and shame.

"The hour was loud, but louder still
Anon the rage of battle roared
Its wild and murderous will;
From Jefferis down to Wistar's ford,
From Jones to Chads the cannon
poured,

While thundered Osborne Hill.

Oh, ne'er before fled holy calm
From out its sainted house of prayer
So frightened through the trembling
air

As from that shrine of Birmingham!

"Oft through the opening cloud we
scanned

The shouting leaders, sword in hand,
Directing the tumultuous scene;
There galloped Maxwell, gallant
Bland

The poet-warrior, while between,
Ringing o'er all his loud command,
Dashed the intrepid Greene.

"Here Sullivan in fury trooped,
There Weedon like an eagle swooped,
With Muhlenberg,—where they were
grouped

The invader dearly earned his
gains,—

And (where the mad should only be
The fiercest champion of the free)

The loudest trumpet-call was
Wayne's;

While in a gale of battle-glee,
With rapid sword and pistol dealing
The blows which set the foemen
reeling,

Sped 'light-horse Harry Lee.'

And once or twice our eye descried,
'Mid clouds a moment blown aside,

With lifted hand that well might
wield

The thunders of the storming field,
The JOVE of battle ride!

And every eye new courage won
Which gazed that hour on Washing-
ton.

"'Twas now that, marvelling, we be-
held

Upon the rising summit near,
By every danger unrepelled,
Confused by smoke and dust,—not
fear,—

A form with wild and floating dress,
Which looked a battle-prophetess.



“There still his blade of battle swung.”

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But when the veiling cloud went
by,
We knew the face and flashing eye
Of Nora, and we heard her cry
Of warning in that hour of need:—

“Speed, Ringbolt, to your leader
speed!
And bid him know the stealthy foe
With double strength comes up be-
hind:
It was but now I saw him wind
From out the valley road below.’

“She ceased: a short and sudden
scream
Escaped her breast; across the stream,
Far piercing through the veil of
haze,
Her fierce eyes sent their staring
gaze,
And, following that stare, we saw,
With soul of wonder and of awe,
Where Porter and bold Porterfield
Renewed the struggle at the ford;
And at the moment when the sword
Swayed in the balance where to yield,
In middle of the mad mêlée
Young Ugo snatch his flag away,
Leap from the hot, opposing shore,
The banner tied about his waist,
And in the flood plunge fiercely o’er,
By a hundred whistling bullets
chased,
And soon, with wild ecstatic hand,
He waved it ’mid our shouting band.

“Naught dearer fills a soldier’s sight,
Or swells his breast with more delight,
Than when his flag, late scorned and
shamed,
Is by some comrade’s hand reclaimed.

“Another look, the ford was clear,
The foe was reeling to the rear;
And now the smoke came deeper on,
And Nora from our sight was gone.
But still her voice rang high and loud:
The speaker hid, the sound so near,
It seemed some spirit of the cloud
Spake those prophetic words of
fear:—

‘Too late! too late!’ this was the
cry:

‘Fly, Ringbolt, Ugo, comrades!—fly!
The reinforcing foe is here!’

“What followed then I scarcely
know,
Save that we dashed amid the
smoke,
And where we saw a red line glow,
There fell our fiery battle-stroke:
Like a mad billow of the main
We broke upon those thundering
banks,
Then, drawing backward, formed
again,
To burst anew along their ranks.

“For hours the scene was still the
same,—
A sleet of lead ’mid sheets of flame;
The hot hail round us hissed and
roared,
Through clouds of seething sulphur
poured,
Until—we knew not how or why—
The day was lost! Our saddened
view
Between the smoke-wreaths’ opening
wrack
Beheld the patriots falling back:
The hour of victory had gone by!
Still fighting, we our line withdrew,
Scorning to yield or fly.

“And now we gained a sheltering
wood,
Where (oh, it was a sight to whet
The sword of vengeance keener
yet!),
Pale with the streaming loss of blood,
By hireling foemen still beset,
Beside his foaming charger stood
The wounded, gallant Lafayette.

“We swept between, with scathing
blow,
Until his bleeding wound was
bound:
Each drop of his the cloven foe
Paid double to the crimson ground,
Until from off that field forlorn
The noblest son of France was borne.

“But, oh, the sight, the last and
worst,
That now upon my vision burst!—
I saw, beyond a thicket-screen,
Pale Nora o’er a warrior lean:

His head upon her knee she nursed,
And held unto his fainting lip
The can he scarce had strength to
sip.

A few swift leaps, we gained the place.
Oh, be the hireling doubly cursed
Who caused that noble breast to
groan!

It was my father's upturned face
Which looked into my own.

"'Nay, son,' he faintly sighed, the
while

His features wore a struggling smile,
'Be not dismayed, 'twill pass anon:
'Tis but a little loss of blood:

I am content: my hand has done
On many a foeman work as good;
And some, methinks, will never tell
Beneath what old man's sword they
fell.

But bear me hence: this trifling
wound——'

Then in my circling arms he swooned.
Nay, start not: still it was not
death,—

His breast anon recalled his breath.

"We made a couch of fallen boughs,
Which thickly strewed the wood-
land path,

Torn by the cannon's flying wrath,
And, with such speed as pain allows,
Conveyed him to the cavern, where
He rests in Nora's watchful care;
Then, with the moon to light my way,
I rode to tell how went the day."

V.

THE BATTLE IN THE CLOUD.

THE red October by his tent
Sits painted in his warrior-hues;
Beside him lies, in peace unbent,
The bow which he too soon will use.

O'er all the hill-sides near and far
He sees the wigwam-smoke dis-
spread;

There all his waiting warriors are,
Streaked with their many tints of
red.

Through all the realm of elm and oak
The blue wreaths of their pipes
increase:

Alas! the calumets they smoke
Are not the sacred pipes of peace!

They plan around their council-fire
The ambush on to-morrow's track;
They do but wait their warrior-sire
To give the signal of attack.

The smile upon his lip to-day,
The dream-light in his plotting eye,
Are but prophetic signs to say
How fierce the arrow-storm shall fly.

Thus Esther mused, as from her tower
She gazed o'er misty stream and
land:

She knew 'twas but War's breathing-
hour

Ere he again, in all his power,
Should wave his flashing battle-
brand.

Even there, beneath her very gaze,
The invader's bristling lines were
spread,

Wrapt in the calm October haze,
And, like the Indian autumn, red.
From Delaware their scarlet ranks
Reached even to the Schuylkill banks,
So near the very mansion-wall
Echoed the frequent bugle-call,—
A sight to make a young heart sad,
And all her patriot hopes destroy,—
While Berkley's loyal breast was mad
With uncontrolled bursts of joy.

He gave the invaders every proof
How much his wishes with them
lay:

Their flag was waving on his roof,
His halls received them night and
day;

He even broached his buried store,
And brought a dozen hampers out,
Willing with generous hand to pour,
Repaid by loyal song and shout.

But one there was whose bowing
plume

Was chiefly welcome to Sir Hugh,
And once before that banquet-room
Had felt his presence through and
through,—

The same who on that long-gone
 night
 The maiden's swelling song had
 heard,
 Who heigned from his great warrior-
 height
 To stoop, and own his heart was
 stirred.

Now oft in Berkley's ear apart
 He spoke about the maiden's hand :
 "The heiress of such noble land,
 Sir Hugh, should have a noble heart."
 And once, with condescending lips,
 He bowed and kissed her finger-tips,—
 Sufficient such approving sign
 From colonel of the royal line.

Thus passed a few calm days away ;
 And now the night was not yet gone,
 Its dreamy veil but half withdrawn,
 Fair Esther on her white couch lay,
 Her soft light melting through the
 shade ;
 Her cheek against her hand was laid,
 Round which the dainty flaxen curls
 Were cast in little golden whirls,
 As Love's own toying fingers light
 Had twirled them o'er the pillow
 white.

That rounded arm, that angel face,
 The breast that stirred the snowy
 frills,
 The whole light form of perfect grace,
 Which the soft covering seemed to
 trace
 As loving it with warm embrace,—
 All this the conjuring fancy thrills ;
 Thrills with a sense of sweet restraint,
 As when before some sculptured saint,
 Or lovely vision poured in paint
 By some pure master, when his heart
 Was molten with the fire of art.

Across her face strange shadows
 played,
 As if by struggling pinions made ;
 For she was dreaming of the fray,
 Watching, amid the smoke-wreaths
 dun,
 Her Edgar bravely battling on,
 The fiercest hero of the day.
 She saw him riding midst the din
 That raged around the Warren Inn,

And on Paoli's fearful plain,
 When Massacre the sword had
 drawn.
 The trumpet's near and startling
 strain,
 That fiercely shook the cloudy
 dawn,
 The drums that rolled their loud
 alarms,
 And legions springing up to arms,
 Flashed through her dream, and,
 when she woke,
 Upon her ear the tumult broke !

Leaders were hurrying to and fro,
 Proclaiming far, "The foe ! the foe !"
 "The foe ! the foe !" rang over all,
 And woke the echoes of Berkley
 Hall.

When Esther looked from her case-
 ment high,
 Fear trembling in her large blue
 eye,
 She stared against the vapor dank
 Of morning hanging gray and blank.¹⁶

Great wrestling voices in the cloud,
 Made by the mist more clear and
 loud,
 Appalled her ear ; the sudden roar
 Of swift artillery shook the shore ;
 While here and there the half-blurred
 flash
 Burned, and every window-sash
 Answered to the thunder-crash.

Anon she saw some warrior-form,
 Like the great genii of the storm,
 Rise into shadowy giant height,
 And then another of equal might,
 And now the followers swung in
 sight,
 Wielding great arms,—as oak with
 oak
 Were battling in the hill-side smoke ;
 Or armies of the infernal god,
 With lightning and with thunder
 shod,
 Were wielding their gigantic blades
 Against the crests of kindred shades ;
 Or, rather, as some pale, strange light
 Were shining on some unseen fight,
 And these the shadows fierce and tall
 It threw upon a cold gray wall,
 Struggling in many a rise and fall.

A scene of horror clear descried
 Must make the stoutest spirit quail;
 But horrors doubly magnified
 Behind a half-concealing veil
 May well make maiden's cheek grow
 pale.

She watched the sun rise o'er the field,
 A great disk like a bloody shield,
 And 'gainst it rose a vision dim,
 Made clearer by that burning rim,
 Two plunging riders huge and grim;
 Their fiery chargers seemed to swim
 Together in the wild commotion,
 Like war-barques in a roaring
 ocean.

But who is he, that warrior slim,
 Now lost to sight, and now more
 plain?

The agile form proclaims it him
 The object of her heart's devotion.
 But, see!—oh, monstrous!—even the
 sun

Burns redder, beholding three to
 one,—

Three striking and one parrying!
 Now,

Doubling the tumult of the scene,
 Another giant swings between!
 Swift flash the blades around his
 brow,

Like lightning o'er some rocky crest,
 Drawn by the metal in its breast:
 But, like the storm-defying rock,
 Harmless about him breaks the shock;
 The battle-clouds, confused and rent,
 Are backward hurled, their thunders
 spent.

Still side by side the heroes fight,
 Following the foe from left to right;
 Swift flies the Wagoner's whirling
 blade,
 And Edgar's is its very shade.

See how they rear, and plunge, and
 smite,
 And, fighting still, wheel out of
 sight.

Her throbbing eyes can bear no more:
 She sinks, half fainting, to the floor.

But no! her heart is with the cause:
 Shall she thus sink away dismayed
 The while her Edgar's flaming blade
 Is flashing even as she bade?

One deep, renewing breath she draws:
 She scorns the weakness thus dis-
 played,
 Contemns the soul that now would
 pause,
 And gains her feet, no more afraid.

Before his door, with sword in hand,
 Sir Hugh was making warlike stand,
 When a troop of loyalists came by,
 Uncertain if to fight or fly:

Such contradictory news was tossed
 Through fogs that veiled the battle-
 din,

They dared not say which side
 would win,

But to their secret hearts within
 They owned the dreadful day was lost.

One glance at Berkley Hall they threw,
 And saw the flag which o'er it flew:
 "Ho, sirrah rebel! who are you?"
 They cried, and trooped around Sir
 Hugh.

"Rebel!" he echoed, in disdain:
 "Who dares such words apply again,
 This hand shall drive the lying breath
 Back to his throat through bleeding
 teeth;

This sword shall cleave the caitiff
 through

Who dares that insult to renew."

"Ho! ho!" they cried,—“a prize! a
 prize!

The rebel dog, through fear and
 shame,

Would skulk beneath a loyal name;
 But where yon rag insults the skies

We know full well our right to
 claim."

"That rag? Insult?"—He choked
 with ire;

He said no more; his eye of fire
 Flashed confidently o'er the roof,
 When—oh, the staggering, deadly
 proof!

His heart, as from a towering crag,
 Fell back, as stunned in dismal
 plight.

Where now his valiant soul of
 might,

The spirit never known to lag?
 There, sailing on the winds aloof,
 He saw the hated patriot flag,

While Ugo's clear and ringing voice
 Flung from the watch-tower far
 and free—
 Making the misty air rejoice—
 The fiery shout of Victory.

Bold Berkley stood with wonder
 dumb,
 Confused, as dead to sight and
 sound;
 But, when he felt his senses come,
 He chafed to find his arms were
 bound;
 And then, with high, indignant
 mien,
 Mounted two surly guards between,
 He left with threatening brow the
 scene.

Sir Hugh long cursed the fatal hour
 Which saw that flag upon his tower:
 Oh, sad mischance that placed it
 there

In that wild moment when despair
 Was trembling down the royal line,—
 When Victory, with her thrusting
 hand,

Through blinding fogs, strove to con-
 sign

Her laurel to the patriot band!¹⁷
 And Berkley, ready for the field,
 At his own door, with waving
 sword,

Stood threatening with defiant word
 The loyal troop which bade him yield.
 And, further, his accusers knew
 That members of the obnoxious crew
 At all hours, day and night, had been
 Prowling round Berkley Manor seen.

All these were ominous proofs and
 black

Which gathered on his troubled track:
 No word of his could move the shade
 Upon his loyal honor laid.

Some favor still the doubt received:
 They would not touch his land or
 hall;

His daughter might retain them
 all.

This but in part his pain relieved:
 His fancy saw marauding bands
 Insult his house, o'errun his lands:
 His daughter, too,—might she not be
 Subject to rough brutality?

His fears were vain: his mansion
 through,
 When the withdrawing troop went
 down
 To hold their quarter in the town,
 Was guarded better than he knew.

VI.

HEADQUARTERS.

O'ER town and cottage, vale and
 height,
 Down came the Winter, fierce and
 white,
 And shuddering wildly, as distraught
 At horrors his own hand had wrought.

His child, the young Year, newly
 born,

Cheerless, cowering, and affrighted,
 Wailed with a shivering voice forlorn,
 As on a frozen heath benighted.

In vain the hearths were set aglow,
 In vain the evening lamps were
 lighted,

To cheer the dreary realm of snow:
 Old Winter's brow would not be
 smoothed,

Nor the young Year's wailing
 soothed.

How sad the wretch at morn or eve
 Compelled his starving home to leave,
 Who, plunged breast-deep from drift
 to drift,

Toils slowly on from rift to rift,
 Still hearing in his aching ear
 The cry his fancy whispers near,
 Of little ones who weep for bread
 Within an ill-provided shed!

But wilder, fiercer, sadder still,
 Freezing the tear it caused to start,
 Was the inevitable chill

Which pierced a nation's agued
 heart,—

A nation with its naked breast
 Against the frozen barriers prest,
 Heaving its tedious way and slow
 Through shifting gulfs and drifts of
 woe,

Where every blast that whistled by
 Was bitter with its children's cry.

Such was the winter's awful sight
 For many a dreary day and night,
 What time our country's hope forlorn,
 Of every needed comfort shorn,
 Lay housed within a hurried tent,
 Where every keen blast found a rent,
 And oft the snow was seen to sift
 Along the floor its piling drift,
 Or, mocking the scant blankets' fold,
 Across the night-couch frequent
 rolled;

Where every path by a soldier beat,
 Or every track where a sentinel
 stood,

Still held the print of naked feet,
 And oft the crimson stains of blood;
 Where Famine held her spectral
 court,

And joined by all her fierce allies:
 She ever loved a camp or fort
 Beleaguered by the wintry skies,—
 But chiefly when Disease is by,
 To sink the frame and dim the eye,
 Until, with seeking forehead bent,
 In martial garments cold and damp,
 Pale Death patrols from tent to tent,
 To count the charnels of the camp.

Such was the winter that prevailed
 Within the crowded, frozen gorge;
 Such were the horrors that assailed
 The patriot band at Valley Forge.

It was a midnight storm of woes
 To clear the sky for Freedom's
 morn;
 And such must ever be the throes
 The hour when Liberty is born.

The chieftain, by his evening lamp,
 Whose flame scarce cheered the hazy
 damp,
 Sat toiling o'er some giant plan,
 With maps and charts before him
 spread,
 Beholding in his warrior-scan
 The paths which through the future
 led.

But oft his eye was filmed and dim,
 And oft his aching bosom yearned,
 As through the camp his fancy
 turned

And saw sad eyes which bent on him
 The look which they in pain had
 learned.

The sunken orbs of hunger there,
 With those that throbbed in fever-
 rage,

As he their suffering might assuage,
 Turned on him their imploring stare.
 And when he spoke the kindly word
 Oft from his lips of pity heard,

And saw those eyes grow bright the
 while

They caught the courage of his
 smile,

His sorrowing heart was doubly
 stirred.

And, to relieve his burdened breast,
 His face into his hands he prest,
 And poured his secret soul in prayer,
 Where hope still rose above despair.

And there was seated by his side
 The noblest of a noble line:

Her whole soul in her face benign,
 Through love and suffering purified,
 Shone worthy such a chieftain's bride.

And not alone his prayer was given,—
 She joined him in imploring Heaven:
 Those prayers fell not in barren sands
 Beside Oblivion's fruitless sea,
 But, borne aloft by angel hands,
 They bloomed to flowers of victory.

The eve was late: naught met the ear,
 But tramp of sentinel marching near,
 Or soft and feathery beat of snow
 Blown light against the window-
 pane,

To melt thereon, and tearlike flow,
 As if the sympathetic glow
 Within had turned each flake to
 rain.

At times there came the slumbrous
 sound

Of waters toiling at the mill,
 Still singing, though in fetters bound,
 The song learned on their natal
 hill.

Let Winter, with oppressive will,
 Bind down the stream with chains
 of ice,

His utmost power shall not suffice
 To keep that heart of Freedom
 still:

Though prisoned in the frozen pond,
 It only reinforcement waits

To burst the tyrant's heavy gates
 And leap to liberty beyond.

Thus with the tranquil flood of power
 Within that camp of ice and snow:
 Though all was silent outward
 show,
 They did but wait the opening hour.

The night was late: the chieftain
 heard
 Approaching footsteps up the yard:
 A knock: he rose, and gave the word:
 The door swung wide; the snowy
 guard

Announced, with some unwonted stir,
 An unexpected visitor,

With two attendants there beside.
 It was a maid with cloak of fur,
 And hood, so closely round her tied
 That well the storm had been defied.

So thick the snow was o'er her blown,
 So flaxen was the falling braid
 Beside the rosy cheek displayed,
 She looked like some fair Norland
 maid

Wrapped in a robe of eider-down.

Beside her stood a youth whose mien
 Brought to the chief's remember-
 ing eye

The stripling hero he had seen
 Bearing a banner proudly high,
 Within a light-horse flying line,
 That fearful day at Brandywine.
 The other was that sturdy dame

The housekeeper: you saw it all
 In one glance at that stately frame,
 Queen of the keys of Berkley Hall.

The maid a moment seemed to stand
 Abashed before that presence high:

He read it in her timid eye,
 And took in his her trembling hand.
 She felt her young blood swifter run;
 Her heart could not regain its calm;
 Her little hand lay in his palm,—
 The noble palm of Washington!

Then rose the lady, with serene,
 Sweet looks o'er all her stately mien;
 And she too took her hand, and
 spoke

In winning accents low and mild:—
 "It is a stormy night, my child,
 For one so young to be abroad;—
 Or have you wandered from your
 road?

Pray, loose your snowy hood and
 cloak,

4

And warm you well beside the fire,
 And take the rest which you require.
 Shrink not because the place is small:
 Our hearts, we trust, have room for
 all."

When Esther answered, "Noble
 friends,

We have not wandered from our
 way,

Nor need we now for warmth
 delay;

Our glowing purpose freely sends
 Its heat, and we would straightway
 do

The duty Heaven directs us to.

"Much have we heard of all the ills
 Suffered along these winter hills,—
 Of famine in the frozen camp,
 Of cheerless couches, cold and damp,
 Where sickness breathes its painful
 breath

'Mid bitter wants that usher Death.

"Hence have we come, with courage
 armed,

With every deep compassion warmed,
 To do the little in our power
 To soothe the suffering of the hour.
 Our sleigh is standing at the door,
 Laden with such poor, hasty store
 As one home from its winter hoard
 Can to a bleeding cause afford:
 And now it but remains to ask
 Permission to assume our task."

She ceased, and stood with glowing
 cheek,—

So beautiful, so young and meek,
 She seemed an answer to their
 prayer,—

A very pitying angel there.

The chieftain's eye grew dim with
 mist,

His heart was all too full to speak;
 The lady's arm the maiden prest,
 She drew her to her matron breast
 And tenderly her forehead kissed.

The chief put out his hands, and
 smiled,—

He laid them on her golden hair,
 And said, in feeling words of
 prayer,

"God bless you, noble child!"

VII.

THE WINTER CAMP.

'Twas midnight in the soldier's shed,
Where lay upon his burning bed
The sufferer, to whose fever-glow
Most welcome came the gusts of
snow,

On searching night-winds, icy thin,
Through every cranny blowing in,
Filling the place with frequent mist,
That round the one poor taper hissed.

Close at his side an aged man
Sat, like a good Samaritan,
Pouring the sacred oil and balm,
His pains and spirit-wounds to calm.
A cloth about his brow was bound,
To shield a deep and stubborn wound;
While round his neck the intruding
air

Lifted and fanned his thin gray hair.
Across his knees his warrior sword
Sustained the book o'er which he
pored;

The leaves were yellow, old, and
stained,
And oft by fluttering, rude winds
stirred,

But still his aged eyesight strained
To read the sacred, unstained Word.

But who was she who knelt beside,
And held the sick man's hand in
hers,

Feeling such pain as only stirs
The breast where love and truth
abide?

It needs but one glance to suffice
To know those large and dewy eyes;
But keener sight 'twould take, I
ween,

To recognize that altered mien
Of him whose features scarcely prove
The Edgar of her hope and love.

But saddest of her painful lot
To look into those eyes which burned,
To find no answering look returned,—
Those eyes whose gladness ever flew
In love to hers, with pleasure new:—
Alas! alas! he knew her not!

A moment thus in prayers and tears
Her bosom poured its flood of fears;

But, conscious that, though blind
with pain,

His heart was hers, and hers lone,
She summoned strength, and stood
again

Strong in his love and in her own.
As one who on a battle-plain,
Feeling his life-blood dew the ground,
Seizes the scarf which love had bound
With trembling hands his breast
around,

And thrust it in the bleeding wound
To stanch the crimson tide of life,
Then springs anew to join the strife,
To give, perchance, the fatal blow
Which lays the invading foeman
low,—

So rose the maid, and firmly prest
His love into her bleeding breast,
And strove, with all such hands can
do,
To win him back to health anew.

It was a charmed sight to see
How lovingly she came and went,—
How like a sunbeam, silently,
She cheered and warmed that winter
tent.

Her cloak of fur around the wall
She hung, to intercept the blast;
Across the door was spread her shawl,
And every cranny was made fast.

Nor here alone her care was given:
She daily passed from shed to shed;
The early morn, the noon, the even,
Still found her near some sufferer's
bed.

And striving oft, as she had striven,
There praying 'mid the sick and
dead,
She saw the chieftain's bowing
head,
And heard his word of courage
said:

Where'er they smiled there seemed
to spread
Thesoft and healing breath of Heaven.

Not fruitless was her constant care,
And not unheard her daily prayer:
The blackest cloud of all was past;
New sunshine filled the winter
skies;

Hope came to Edgar's couch at last:
No more her face his glance denies;

His soul responded through his
 eyes
 With all the warmth which love
 supplies.

And with the first returning breath—
 A breath as sweet as that which
 stirs
 Through April boughs, when all
 the woods
 Feel the first thrill of promised
 buds—

• He owned his soul was doubly hers,
 Since she had called it back from
 death.

One day, as by the scanty fire
 She strove to make it sparkle higher,
 The while her patient's slender
 form

Was propt beside, and mantled
 warm,

The old man, Edgar's patriot sire,
 Entered with overshadowed brow,
 And said, "Sweet daughter, come
 with me:

I fear another couch may now
 Lay claim to your fidelity.

The strange wild woman you so oft
 Encountered in your winter round,
 And who so frequently you found
 Soothing the sick with accents soft,—
 Accents which suited not the dress,
 So fitted for the wilderness,—
 Now lies a victim to the spell
 Which she in others strove to quell,
 With fever sorely racked and thrilled,
 'Mid kindly hands, but all unskilled.

"I have not yet forgot the day
 When on the battle-field I lay
 Almost in death, she was the first
 To slake my fever-flame of thirst,
 Or how within the secret cave
 She tended me so well and long,
 Cheering me oft with some wild
 stave

Of ballad or of mountain-song,
 And oft, as though I were a child
 (There's something in her brain
 amiss),

Telling some legend strange and wild.
 For this— But nay,—it needs
 not this

To wake compassion in your eyes:—
 A human creature suffering lies."

Then Esther rose, and joined her
 guide,
 And reached the shed where Nora
 lay;

But, when she stood by Nora's side,
 Her heart of courage sank away.
 For, oh, it was a piteous sight
 To see those eyes so strangely bright,
 And all that flood of scattered hair
 As blown by winds of wild despair,
 And all the trappings of her dress
 Flung wide by hands of hot distress!

There Ugo by the wagoner stood,
 And both in anxious, gloomy mood;
 She stared upon the wondering child,
 Then wept as o'er some burning
 thought,

Then gazed at Ringbolt strangely
 wild,

And laughed, as though her pain
 were naught.

The saddest of all sounds that flow
 Is laughter forced from deeps of woe.

A moment on the maid she glanced,
 As if her spirit hung entranced,
 And now, with curious, searching
 scan,

Surveyed the pitying, gray-haired
 man,
 And spoke with low, mysterious
 air:—

"Thou poor young bride, beware!
 beware!

Oh, wed not with that cold white
 hair!

That summer smile is but device:—
 His breast is snow, his heart is ice.

Oh, cold was the bridegroom,
 All frozen with pride!—

He first slew her lover,
 Then made her his bride.

Ringbolt, how goes the battle? Ho!
 Fly, Ugo!—fly!—the foe!—the foe!
 A stealthy trick!—but they shall
 know

The stricken can return the blow!
 The tyrant and his host shall flee,—
 When patriots strike, they shall be
 free!

"Our flag like a meteor
 Sweeps down through the fight:
 It brightens the valley
 And burns on the height.

"Oh, did you not see
How it sprung like a flame
When the voice of the nation
Called Freedom by name?

"On the soul of the tyrant
That mighty name fell,
As in Gessler's heart quivered
The arrow of Tell!"

Thus sang she, and fell back with
breath

Drawn faint as through the lips of
death;

The life within the frame consumed
Seemed scarce again to be illumed.

Then Ringbolt gazed on her with
eye

Of pain,—almost of agony,—
And said, with heavy, solemn tongue,
" 'Tis hard for one so good and young
To suffer thus! The poor white
dove

Was murdered by a falcon's love!"

Then Esther said, "Indeed, my
friends,

It is a sight which sadly sends
The blood back on the heart, to see
Such depths of human misery.

Oh, surely this wild, dismal camp
Is all too rough and cold and damp:

'Twere better if she were conveyed
And in some quiet chamber laid,
'Mid hands that know to tend and
spread

The comforts of a sufferer's bed,
Where pity only holds control,
With not a sound to vex the soul.
And such a room my heart allows,
Within a well-provided house,
And well I know her couch will
find

The hands attendant, gentle, kind;
For Hulda, ever good and mild,
Will guard her as she were her child.

Haste, Ugo, haste, and bring the
sleigh,

And let her be enwrapt straight-
way:

'Tis but a short two hours' ride;
So easily her course shall glide,
So deep shall be her bed of fur,
So soft and noiseless be the stir,
That she may sleep and never know
How swiftly fly the miles below."

A moment there was seen to go
O'er Ringbolt's face a blackening
cloud:

At length his nodding forehead
bowed:

"Perchance," he said, "'twere better
so."

The sleigh was brought, and many
a fold

Of fur and blanket wrapt her form:
And now within the wagoner's hold,

Like a light infant, close and warm,
She lay,—and thus, beside the maid,
To Berkley Mansion was conveyed.

He bore her up the shadowy stair,
The 'wilderder sufferer knew not where,
And in a chamber warm and large
He left her in kind Hulda's charge.

A cup of wine,—bluff words of
thanks,—

If Esther would regain the camp,
Ugo must be her guard and
guide,—

The great hall heard his heavy
tramp,

The deep snow marked his giant
stride,

Which led him up the Schuylkill
banks

To join again his waiting ranks.

VIII.

THE HERALDS.

DAYS came and went round Nora's
couch:

If there was need of aught to tell
That gentle hands attended well,
Her mild and altered mien could
vouch.

Weeks came and went, and every day
Brought better news from out the
valley:

Each tiding-tongue was glad to say
The troops, the cause, all seemed to
rally.

And Esther's heart, though still her
sire

Was captive in the royal camp,

Saw Hope re-fan her smouldering fire
Within the cloud's desponding
damp.

'Twas evening, and she watched the
gleam
Of moonlight over hill and stream ;
Though winter now was wellnigh
through,

And spring-time promised soon to
blow,
Still, all the scene which met her
view

Lay in a gleaming robe of snow.
She sat and gazed upon the stars,
As on a banner there unfurled,
And wondered if each sparkling
world

Was shocked like this with martial
jars,—

If through those tranquil, silver
skies

Stern warriors bent devoted eyes
In worship on the planet Mars.

She mused,—when Hulda's waking
hand

Was laid upon her resting arm,
And, looking up with mild alarm,
She saw within the moonlight stand
Another, whose brave feet had paced
Through paths of snow in breathless
haste.

"I come"—this was her hurried word,
She scarcely seemed for breath to
pause—

"To you, for I have often heard
Your heart is with our patriot
cause:

You have swift horses at command,
And have, perchance, some trusty
hand

By whom a message may be borne:
The word I bear must reach our band
Before to-morrow morn."

"Speak on!" the startled hearer
cried:

"It shall, no matter what betide!"

"Our enemy a plan has laid—

I got the news, it boots not how—
By which our camp shall be betrayed,
And all our noble army made
To bite the dust, or basely bow.

This was their threat; and even now
Their rapid horsemen form in line,
And ere the dawn 'tis their design
To strike the fatal blow.

"This is the news: I pray you speed;
The hour is short, and dire the
need:

I have no time to answer more;
But if our noble chief would know
The source from which these tidings
flow,

Then tell him boldly, undeterred,
'Tis Lydia Darrach's faithful word,¹⁸
Which served him once before."

"Thanks, noble heart!" young Es-
ther cried,

And flung her daring tresses wide:

"Spite every danger or mishap,
Ere yon low moon shall disappear,
The news shall reach our General's
ear

Though Death stood in the gap!"

Waiting no more to hear or say,
The herald took her homeward way.

"Now, Ugo!"—this was Esther's
call,—

"Bridle the swiftest steed in stall,
Fly with the news you just have
heard,

And let our chieftain know the word."

"A steed!" he answered; "but sup-
pose

The road should be beset with foes,
The boldest rider scarce would do
To bear such needful tidings through.
No, no: I have a better way,—

One quite as swift, and far more
sure;

Nor horse nor man my course shall
stay,

I shall be mounted so secure."

She stared at him with puzzled
brow,

But he nor look nor answer stayed;
She heard the rattling which he
made

Within the dusky hall below;
She saw him dash across the snow,
Until he gained the frozen river,

Watched him a moment bending low,
Then, like an arrow from the bow,
Beheld his flying figure go

On skates, with many a flash and quiver,
As if the glistening ice and steel,
In lightning, would his speed reveal.

The smile applauded the device:

She watched him, with a glad surprise,

Until he vanished from her eyes.

But suddenly, with fear renewed,

She stood in anxious attitude:—

That messenger upon the ice,
It might, and yet might not, suffice.

If highways held the foeman wolf,
The river also had its gulf,

And 'twas the season when the sun
Old Winter's work had half undone;

The snowy eaves were thawed at noon,

The thinning ice must vanish soon;
The moon, too, hung with sinking disk;

Her light would shortly be at end.

No, no: it would not do to send

One messenger on such a risk:

All must be staked to win or lose;

In such a cause, who stayed to choose?

In haste she ordered out the sleigh:

None heard the maid her purpose say;

'Twas not for others' ears discussed,

For there was none whom she would trust,

Save Hulda, and her duty lay
Round suffering Nora night and day.

Alone she mounted, without pause,
To save, perchance, her country's cause:

Away, away, the light car flew;

The hoofs flung up the powdery snow;

Swift as a river seemed to flow

The road beneath, where, slipping through

The crispy foam with whistling shrieks,

The runners left their glistening streaks.

Oh, enviable star in heaven

That looked through that still crystal even,

And saw how those two heralds went,
Each on the same high mission bent,—
One on a road of ice below,
One on a stream-like road of snow,
The locks of each flung backward far,
And trailing like a meteor star:
Oh, ne'er before sped soul with soul
In holier race for earthly goal!

Just as the last hill-top was neared,

And the swift horses slackened pace,

A voice, as if it broke through space,

Pealed to the welkin as it cheered,

Announcing the last danger cleared:—

'Twas Ugo's wild, triumphant mirth,
Ringing as it would circle earth.

And thus the two young heralds met,
In spite of foes about them set,

In spite of dark and wintry weather,

And to the grateful patriot chief,
In burning language plain and brief,

Delivered their great news together;
And soon the horses, flecked with foam,

Well pleased, were turned again for home.

While Ugo took the guiding rein,

Thus held the maid her musing vein:—

"Now the moon has left her track,

Dropt behind the mountain-bars;

Paly shine the cold white stars,

And the pale earth answers back;

All the world a shadow lies,

Darkly, breathless, deathly still,

While above us hang the skies,

Throbbing to our throbbing eyes,

Till the fancy almost hears

Something of the strains that thrill,
Passing through the happy spheres.

"Yonder the great Northern Wain
Rings across the azure plain,

Nightly rolling toward the goal

Of the ever-steadfast Pole:

Every steed in that great car

On his forehead wears a star,

Proud with bells upon his mane.

"Sweetest of the chimes of heaven,

Is yon clustered sister-seven,

In their turret's misty height,

Like a stem of lilies white,—

Our sweet valley Pleiades,
 Ringing perfume on the breeze.
 Ring, sweet sisters, clearer still :
 My heart listens for the thrill
 From your sacred belfry-cell :
 Pour your chiming ; but, ah, the knell
 Floats from off your silver lips
 For that lost one in eclipse !

"Lost !—ah, no : she is not lost ;
 Her song was too fine and sweet
 With your singing to compete ;
 On some more celestial coast
 She is now the angels' boast,
 With her joy forever told,
 In a tower of shining gold.

"Ring, sweet stars of heaven, anew,
 And my heart will sing with you ;
 Ring !—oh, ring !—that I may hear
 And feel that heaven is sometimes
 near."

Thus Esther in her happy breast
 The pleasure of her soul confest ;
 For she was glowing with a sense
 (Although the thought had scarcely
 heeded)

That she had done a sacred deed
 Which was its own sweet recompense.
 The singing sleigh, the horses' tread,
 Slow pacing homeward at their will,
 The flowing road that backward sped,
 The stars that chased her overhead,
 Like heavenly guardians with her
 still,

The crystal air, but not too chill,
 All soothed her with a gentle calm,
 As if a cool and tender palm
 Were on her tranquil forehead prest
 To woo her into peaceful rest.

And Ugo held in dreamy spell
 The reins which seemed about to
 fall ;

But homeward steeds remember well
 The road which leads them to their
 stall.

All nature seemed as it were fanned
 With Slumber's cool and downy
 pinions ;

But, hold !—the steeds are at full
 stand !

Around them close the foeman's
 minions !

Is she awake, or does she dream ?

The sword-flash that before her stirs,
 The scarlet coat, the helmet's gleam,
 The bursting laugh of rude de-
 rision,

A rough voice shouting, "Pris-
 oners !"

A soldier at each horse's rein,
 And Ugo dragged among the train,—
 All this proclaims it is no vision.

The boy is loud,—he will not stay :

A boy is he, armed soldiers they.

"What men are ye," she strove to
 say,

"Who dare to stop a lady's way ?

I charge ye, off ! Unbind the boy !"

Whereat the captain's voice replied,

Close at the startled maiden's side,

"Lady, we wish not to annoy

Further than strictest duty calls :

Be not alarmed : if aught befalls

Amiss, the fault shall not be ours,—

We serve the cause of higher powers :

Though it seem hard, and you con-
 demn,

Our prisoner, you must go to them."

He took the reins, and said no more :

With mounted men to guard them
 down,

Even past her own unhappy door

She went a captive to the town.

PART III.

I.

THE TANKARD OF WINE.

Oh, what delight is in the air
 What time the new-born spring is
 there !

How sweet it is on the breezy slope,
 'Mid flowers in bloom or about to ope,
 When the dog-wood, like a maiden
 dight

In bridal robes of snowy white,
 Beside the flaming maple stands,
 While the oak, with priestly hands
 Spread above their bowing heads,
 His whispering benediction sheds ;
 Where never a careless wind forgets
 To tell of the woodland violets,

Or how it half forgot to pass
 From spice-wood boughs and sassafras;
 And, like the soul of a mocking-bird,
 Repeating every song it heard,
 Each sweeter for being brought afar,
 As all the joys of memory are.

Such Esther knew were the delights
 Clothing the valley and the heights;
 And every perfumed air she met,
 Fresh breathing of the wood and field,
 Filled her with longings and regret
 For joys the city could not yield.

Had she a pleasure in her breast,
 In secret it was all suppressed;
 For every look and every tone
 Proclaimed her Melancholy's own.

'Twas true, her captive chains were light,—
 Another might have deemed them bright;
 But, light or bright, she felt the pain
 Of knowing that there was a chain
 Which flowers, though twined with subtlest art,
 Could not make welcome to her heart:
 They could but hide from others' stare
 The galling weight she knew was there.
 The city and its farthest street
 Were free to her unfettered feet;
 But there was still that line beyond,
 O'er which her feelings, wildly fond,
 Took yearning wing, and well she knew

She could not follow where they flew.

Sir Hugh grew daily more appeased:
 He mingled with the martial court,
 His fetters seemed but things of sport,
 And even now might be released
 If he in any slight degree
 Would bow and sue for liberty.
 But no! they had assailed his pride:
 His loyalty had been denied:
 He would not bow the suppliant limb,—

Nay, rather they must bow to him.

And now, too, all he held most dear
 Next to his pride, his child, was here,
 And many a noble officer
 Bowed supplely low to him and her;
 And even those with hearts allied
 In secret to the patriot side
 Made him obeisance; for they deemed
 He might be other than he seemed.
 These flattering tributes to him paid
 Gave sweet contentment, and he stayed.

'Twas twilight, and the evening air
 Came dancing over Delaware,
 Fanning the easy sailor's hair,
 Who laughed and quaffed away his care,
 With merry song and gusty din,
 Under the stoop before the inn,
 Where soon, arrayed in colors fine,
 Two officers of the royal line
 Reeled singing in at the open door,
 Aflush with pleasure and with wine:
 'Twas noble, they said,—or rather
 swore,—
 With such a general to dine.

Each face was scarlet as their dress:
 The whole man seemed to loom and shine,
 As if the red blood of the vine
 Its glowing presence would express
 By every visible outward sign.

"Ho, landlord of the 'Ship and Sheaf,'
 Bring us a flagon, and be brief!
 We must not let the tide go by,
 To leave us stranded high and dry,
 Or wait to-morrow's evening flood
 To lift us o'er the sand and mud;
 'Twill never do to stick aground
 While other barques are sailing round:
 Let loose the wine, and, should that fail,
 Then swim us off with good brown ale!"

Thus shouted they, then searched the gloom,
 To note what guests were in the room:
 Their glance found only two beside.
 "Two fellows there I think I spied,"

Thus whispered one. "Nay, there are more,"

The other answered,—“surely four :
But two, perchance, are made of wine!”

Whereat they laughed ; and still they swore

’Twas noble, glorious, and divine
With such a general to dine.

“Ho, landlord, bring another flask,
To nerve us for to-morrow’s task !
To-morrow’s task ! Ah, that will be
A scene of such rare chivalry
That all shall go joy-mad to see !
A thousand times more bright and fine

Than Germantown or Brandywine !
How those poor devils in the gorge,
Hidden away at Valley Forge,
In their tatterdemalion rags,
Making their empty rebel brags,
Would ope their boorish eyes to gaze
Upon the splendors which shall blaze
And burn, until the night is spent,
Around our glorious tournament !
Come, landlord, drink, before we go,
A bumper to the royal show !

“That fellow there, who seems to sulk
And in the shadowy corner skulk,
Go bring him out, and let him clear
His throat, that he may loudly cheer
The golden glories he shall see
Around to-morrow’s pageantry !
Come, sirrah, when a colonel bids,
Nor sit with scowl like pirate Kidd’s :
This smile will smooth your hostler frown
When it washes the hay-dust down !”

The stranger rose : through a sideway door

He pushed a young companion out,
Then stood a moment as in doubt,
The while he scanned the revellers o’er,

Then strode to the table with visage grim,
Demanding what they would with him.

“To drink our general’s health !” they cried.

“Our general !” boldly he replied,
And drained the goblet willingly.

“And to our tournament beside !”

“And to the tournament !” echoed he ;

“And may I be on hand to see !”

“Again !” the other cried, with zest ;
“Fill high !—methinks that were a breast

To hold a gallon in its chest,—
And let the toast be to the fair,—
To her whose colors I shall wear,—
The badge of the ‘ Burning Mountain ’ mine,

‘ The maid I love ’ my motto sign.
Then pledge for whom I set the lance,
With whom in banquet I shall dance,—

Perchance’—he hiccoughed, and waved his wine—

“To her who may be bride of mine,—
I have the father’s word for all :

Or, if not that’—with drunken leer
He whispered in his comrade’s ear,
Then laughed till the cup was nigh to fall,

And shouted, “The heiress of Berkley Hall !”

The stranger’s tankard was ready up ;
Each his lip was about to dash,
When, with an oath like a thunder-crash,

He flashed the wine in the speaker’s face

And into the other’s the empty cup,
And then, with heavy, giant pace,
Strode leisurely beyond the place ;
And, ere they woke from their disgrace,

A light boat and a springing oar
Had borne the wagoner far from shore.

II.

THE MESCHIANZA.¹⁹

O CITY the beloved of Penn,
How was your quiet startled when
Red Mars made your calm harbor glow
With all the splendors he can show !

How looked your tranquil founder down
That day upon his cherished town,—

That town which in the sylvan wild
He reared and tended like a child ?

Methinks that patriarch and his peers,
Who fashioned all your staid retreats,

Groaned then in their celestial seats
With sad offended eyes and ears ;
And, had their loving faith allowed,
That day, in mournful spirit bowed,
Each had turned his olive-wand
Into a rod of reprimand.

The May was there,—the blue-eyed
May ;

The sweet south breeze came up the
bay,

Fanning the river where it lay
Voiceless, with astonished stare,—
The great sea-drinking Delaware.

There, in the broad, clear afternoon,
With myriad oars, and all in tune,

A swarm of barges moved away,
In all their grand regatta pride,
As bright as in a blue lagoon,
When gondolas from shore to shore
Swam round the golden Bucentaur

On a Venetian holiday,
What time the Doge threw in the
tide

The ring which made the sea his
bride.

'Mid these were mighty platforms
drawn,

Each crowded like a festal lawn,—
Great swimming floors, o'er which
were rolled

Cloth of scarlet, green, and gold,
Like tropic isles of flowery light
Unmoored by some enchanter's might,
O'erflowed with music, floated down
Before the wharf-assembled town.

A thousand rowers rocked and sung,
A thousand light oars flashed and
flung

A fairy rainbow where they sprung.
Conjoining with the singers' voice,

In ecstatic rival trial,
Every instrument of choice,
Mellow flute and silver viol,
Wooded the soft air to rejoice ;
Till on wings of splendor met,

Clearer, louder, wilder yet,
Clarion and clarionet,
And the bugle's sailing tone,
As from lips of tempests blown,
Made the whole wide sky its own,
Shivering with its festal jar
The ærial dome afar.

Thus the music past the town
Winged the swimming pageant down,
Till with one loud crash it dropt,
And the bright flotilla stopt,
Mooring in the bannered port
At the flowery wharves of Sport.

There wide triumphal arches flamed
With painted trophies, which pro-
claimed,
With mottoes wrought in many a
line

Around some brave heraldic sign,
That all the splendors here displayed
Were honors to great chieftains paid.

Pavilions round the field were spread,
With flying banners overhead,
Where, on a high and central throne,
The two commanders reigned alone :
The admiral, whose powdered hair
Had oft been fanned by ocean air ;
The general, whose eye oft sped
O'er fields transfused from green to
red,

As if the very plain should wear
The hue his army held so dear,—
Both deeming that the world must
bow

Before the awful name of Howe.

And there,—oh, feast for painter's
heart,

And yet a light to mock his art,
To kindle all a poet's fire,
To waken, madden, and inspire,
Yet leave him mastered and undone,
As faints a taper in the sun,—
Yes, there, in many a beaming row,
Was lit such beauty as might glow
Alone in fabled tourney-rings ;

Held in those far enchanted scenes
Where all are princesses and queens
And all the jousting knights are
kings.

Such light was then our city's boast ;
And such, methinks, it has not lost :

The features Stuart loved to trace
 And clothe in his immortal glow
 Are met by many a soul-lit face,
 Secured by Sully's touch of grace,
 As bright as theirs of long ago.

O noble masters, might I here
 Seize the light pencil from your grasp,
 Then should the picture reappear
 Which vainly I attempt to clasp.
 What though the vision with me stays,
 The awkward pencil tamely strays,
 And leaves me, after all my cost,
 To sigh above my labor lost.
 But ye who have the conjuring will,
 The painter's gift, the poet's heart,
 Take the rough lines I cannot fill,
 And touch them with your clearer art.

In middle of the central group—
 The fairest maidens of the troop,
 Each in her flowing Turkish dress—
 Sat Esther, in her loveliness.
 A graceful turban bound her brow,
 Its end flung back in gauzy flow,
 And from its sides hung loops of pearls,
 Dripping among the golden curls,
 While on its snowy front was set
 A diamond stellar coronet,
 And in the middle of the stars
 A red rose shone, like burning Mars;
 The silken robe, of ample fold,
 Was white, and bound with belt of gold,
 O'er which a scarf of wondrous lace
 Added its wealth of flowing grace.

Her beauty thrilled the gazing crowd,
 And made the heart of Berkley glad;
 But if Sir Hugh that hour was proud,
 Still prouder was the stripling lad,
 Brave Ugo, who beside her chair,
 With height and form beyond his age,
 Stood near, her guardian and her page;
 His large dark eyes and raven hair
 To hers made contrast rich and rare;
 And, decked in Oriental suit,
 He looked a Turk from head to foot,

Holding superb and tranquil mien,
 As by the throne of a sceptred queen.

Now rang the bugle to the cloud;
 And now seven knights, in brave attire
 Of white and scarlet gayly donned,
 On chargers well caparisoned,
 And each attended by his squire,
 Rode in before the admiring crowd;
 And soft eyes sparkled brightly fond,
 As each before his lady bowed.
 Then rang the herald's trumpet higher,
 And swelled the challenge fiercely loud:—
 "The brave knights of 'The Blended Rose'
 Proclaim the fair whom they defend
 Are lovelier, nobler in their pride,
 Than all the world can show beside;
 And he who dares this vaunt oppose
 We challenge to the direful end!"

Three times abroad the vaunt was thrown;
 And now another bugle blown,
 Flinging its scorn around the heaven,
 Ushered in the answering troop,—
 The gallant and defying seven,
 In suits of orange and of black,
 With harnessed steeds and squires to back;
 And these with proud and knightly stoop
 Made their obeisance to the fair
 Whose beauty they defended there.

Then swelled the other herald's cry:—
 "'The Knights of the Burning Mount' defy,
 And, in support of their ladies' charms,
 Challenge all chivalry to arms!"

But how looked Esther on the scene?
 Was there no pleasure in the place
 To call the color to her face?
 A weary sadness veiled her mien;
 Her eye, which took the splendor in,
 'Mid all the show no joy could win;

For in her patriotic heart
 Another picture, far apart,
 Rose, with its drear, contrasted shade,
 Before her sympathetic eye,
 Which glistened with a pitying
 damp.

She saw the starving valley camp,
 And heard the sufferer's dying
 sigh,—
 Saw all the bitter wants that
 weighed—

Her country's only hope and trust—
 A noble army to the dust ;
 And even when her champion proud
 Bent low, a gallant knight in
 black,
 She scarcely noticed that he bowed ;
 Her sad eye paid no glances back.

Again the flying bugle's flash
 Across the waiting scene was
 pealed ;
 Then came the sudden shock and
 dash
 Of spears that met in splintering
 crash

On every loudly-ringing shield.
 Then sword with sword together rang
 With many a fierce and fiery clang,
 As on some earnest battle-field.

Oh for the pen which brave Froissart
 Waved, sword-like, in the knightly
 van !

Oh for the pencil and the art
 Of battle-loving Wouverman !
 That on my page might be unrolled
 Another tourney "cloth of gold" !

All eyes were on the struggle bent,
 And every gazer forward leant,
 Each breathless at the whirling
 sight,—

When dashed in midst another
 knight,
 Driving the raging foes between,
 And, like a whirlwind, joined the
 scene.

His tall and foaming steed was black,
 And reared and leapt with plunge
 and wheel ;
 And he who loomed upon his back
 Wore on his breast a plate of steel,
 While on his head a helmet shone
 With flying plume,—the visor down.

The armor was embossed and rich,
 And seemed to Esther to recall
 The helmet and the breastplate which
 Formed part of that within the
 niche,—

The ancestral suit of Berkley Hall ;
 As if the knight, so grim and tall,
 Finding the ancient form too small,
 Content to shield his head and breast,
 Had borrowed but cuirass and crest.

His raining blows were swift and bold :
 No sooner was his weapon set
 'Gainst every lifted blade he met,
 Than flew that blade from out its
 hold ;

While many a bravest knight,
 alarmed,
 Recoiled apace, abashed, disarmed.

But when he met the searched-for foe,
 Fair Esther's champion in the list,
 His mighty hand could not resist,—
 He dealt an angry, giant's blow,—
 Perchance it was intended so :

Somehow, the awkward weapon
 missed—

It glanced beyond the approaching
 head,
 And on the "black knight's" mouth
 instead

Alit the great hilt-clinching fist !
 A blow that made the earth swim
 round,
 And sent him bleeding to the ground.

Then, while the murmur questioned
 loud,
 He dashed to the wondering maid and
 bowed,

And raised her white glove to his lip.
 Now seemed her eye to understand ;
 She guessed that form of high com-
 mand,

And felt a folded paper slip
 Stealthily into her startled hand ;
 Then, like an eagle on flashing wing,
 He sailed beyond the wondering ring.

All marvelled ; but few guessed the
 truth :

They mostly thought it in the play ;
 And even the knights, with frowns
 uncouth,

And many a savage inward oath,
 Were pleased among themselves to
 say

That some hot-headed frolic youth
 Had chosen thus to share the day,
 By dashing in the jousting fray,
 To bear the highest prize away,
 And leave them all in wondering
 doubt,
 As oft in ancient tourney-bout.

The two commanders, looking on,
 Approved the novel action done,
 And said, in accents loud and bluff,
 The brave surprise was well per-
 formed,
 And that it was a knightly thing,
 Although, perchance, a little rough.
 And catching this, as from a king,
 The shout of joy ran round the
 ring,
 Till every clapping hand was
 warmed,
 To send the applause on circling
 wing.
 And now the day was wellnigh spent,
 And evening closed the tournament.

III.

THE BANQUET.

OH, merry and good is a blooming
 wood
 On a calm, clear afternoon,
 When every maid, in a flowery hood,
 Sings, as every maiden should
 In the leafy shades of June:—
 When every light form wears the
 proof
 Of what beneath her homestead roof
 The loom of Winter weaves,—
 The blue, and green, and scarlet woof,
 The white and flowing sleeves:—
 When every archer bends his bow,
 To bid the laughing arrow go
 Among the laughing leaves!

And merry the call to a Christmas hall,
 Where nuts and ale abound,
 Where music, with gusty rise and
 fall,
 Chases the revellers dancing all
 In many a mazy round.

But louder, clearer, merrier yet
 The music and mirth together met
 What time the evening feast was set

And the tournament was through:
 The knights came in, each waving
 plume
 Sending a murmur through the room,
 And, bowing to eyes they deemed
 most sweet,
 Each knelt before his lady's feet,
 To receive the trophy due.

But where was Esther's champion?
 Had he no tourney-honor won?
 And must the flower her turban
 wore
 Remain unclaimed, and feel the blight
 Of all that withering festal light?
 She plucked the rose with fingers
 white,
 And tore the leaves before their sight,
 And strewed them on the floor.

That feasting-hall was a sight to
 see,
 And, seen, it must remembered
 be:
 A hundred banners lined the wall,
 Festooning over swords and spears,
 And thrice a score of chandeliers
 Made such a glory through the hall
 As only summer noonday wears;
 And many a mirror, wide and tall,
 Decked with flowers on golden piers,
 Caught the splendor, and echoed it all,
 As if to stretch the gorgeous place
 Into the outer halls of space,
 As it were to last a thousand years.

All, all was bright as summer waves
 That sing and dance on a flowery
 shore,
 Where the billow decks the bank it
 laves
 With pearls, and then retreats for
 more.
 The only shadows around the feast
 Were a score of turbaned, Nubian
 slaves
 Arrayed in livery of the East.

The merriest sounds o'erflowed the
 scene,
 While flashed the brimming wine
 between,
 Where each, from the cup he loved
 to quaff,
 Caught something of its vineyard
 laugh.

There was whispered love, soft words
of bliss,

On lips Adonis would die to kiss,
Rustle of silks, and rattle of fans,
Tinkling of glasses, and, crowning
this,

Music that swelled from invisible
clans:—

Till, closing his eyes, the listener heard
The rush of a woodland waterfall,
And all the leaves of the forest stirred
By a flutter of wings, and the noisy
call

Of every loudest-throated bird.

The feast was past, the toast was
said,

The inevitable speeches made,
And the long-cheered, triumphant two

Breathed easier, and drank anew.

'Twas now that one of the leading
knights

Bowed, and, with soft persuasion
long,

Prayed, as a wreath to their delights,
Our maid would crown the hour
with song.

In vain her timid lips demurred:
The praise of her voice so much was
heard,

They would not take the denying
word.

In view of this, a harp had been,
Only a moment past, brought in.
And there in a flood of light it shone
Golden on its waiting throne.

At length, upon her father's arm,
And bidding her page beside her
stay,

She went, though tremorous with
alarm,

And André, bowing, led the way.

She gained the throne, and sat
thereon:

Her breath came short for such a
need;

One glance across the room she sent,
A thousand eyes were on her bent;

They seemed a thousand arrows
drawn,

And she the victim that must
bleed.

One long sustaining breath she drew,
Her drooping lids shut out the view,—
Till, suddenly dashing her veil aside,
And flinging her golden ringlets wide,
Her arms around the harp she pressed,
Loving it with her loving breast,

As if its touch her fears might
smother.

And now her hands along the
strings

Flashed daringly across each other,
As when two birds, at dividing wires,
Outsinging all the woodland choirs,
Flutter with half-invisible wings.

When climbed her fingers high and
higher,

Twinkling among the treble notes
There seemed unnumbered silver
throats,

Thrilling the sky with wild desire;
Then sudden lightnings flashed their
fire,

Till, in the heavier chords below,
The thunder dealt its rumbling blow;
And now the rain was shivered down,
And all the tempest-bugles blown.

Then came her voice: at first 'twas low,
Like a sweet brook among the
rushes;

But, like that brook, its further flow
Swelled soon to fuller, nobler
gushes.

SONG.

I.

In the vanished time and olden,
Ere the ages yet were golden,
A great king ruled his misty isles
In sullen state alone,
Till, hearing of a maiden
With marvellous beauty laden,
He swore she must be brought to him,
To tend beside his throne.

II.

And forthwith every vassal
Who dwelt beside his castle
Was sent to bring the maiden in
Before the morrow morn;

And straightway to her bower
They went in all their power :
But she met them with her noble mien
And scorned them with her scorn.

III.

"Go, tell your tyrant master
Earth threatens no disaster
So direful to a maiden's soul
As is a monarch's smile ;
That Death shall wed me rather
'Neath the roof-tree of my father,
Than I should serve the greatest king
That ever ruled an isle."

IV.

Then laughed they loud derision
At the poor defenceless vision
Of a simple maid who dared alone
Defy their mighty king ;
"Then come," they cried, "the
trial ;
Our lord brooks no denial :
Your slender wrists must bear the
bands
Our master bade us bring."

V.

But, firm in her reliance,
With a glance of fierce defiance
She looked into their cowering eyes,
That drooped as in disgrace !
But, remembering royal anger,
With a sudden clash and clangor
They drew their mighty falchions
forth
And flashed them in her face.

VI.

A moment, as in sadness,
She looked upon their madness,
With calm, white arms serenely there
Upon her bosom laid ;
Then, with no thrill of terror,
But smiling at their error,
Three times she clapped her snowy
hands,
And signalled thus for aid.

VII.

Three times her palms resounded,
And at once she stood surrounded
By noble brothers rushing in
From every native field :
Their forms were rough and tawny,
But their limbs were lithe and
brawny,
And, instead of taking captives there,
The captors now must yield.

VIII.

And, against their own consenting,
She sent them back repenting.
The mad king cropt their coward ears
To satisfy his wrath :
And still that noble maiden,
With all her beauty laden,
Went singing on her happy way,
With honor in her path.

Scarce had the last word left her
tongue,
And while the chord still trembling
hung
From which the bird-like note had
sprung,
There rose a tumult wild without,²⁰
A hurried rush of loud alarms,
The flash of flames, the sentinel's
shout,
With startled drums that beat to
arms.
The shuddering guests no more could
doubt,
But quaked to think the rebel crew
Had burst in all their midnight
power
Upon them, in their revel hour,
To act the Trenton scene anew.

What meant that glow whose fearful
shine
Illumed the abatis-line,
Which fired the scene, as if to light
The horrors of the coming fight ?

Now could they hear the mounted
troop
Like hungry vultures round them
swoop,
And see the clattering hoofs of steel
Where lightning flashed from every
heel.

Out rushed the guardian ranks aflame,
To put the intruding crew to shame;
But, strange to tell, without a blow,
To say that there had been the foe,
The troopers fled, and left behind
Their mocking laughter on the wind.

The guards pursued them past the town,
By the same road which brought them down,
And soon the sentinels descried
The line returning, flushed with pride.

Then laughter filled the hall again,
While pleasure took the place of pain,
And every happy face was lit
With this fresh source of mirth and wit,
And music spread its circling wing
To lead the dance in ampler swing.

But what was wrong? What ailed
Sir Hugh?
Why sought he thus the assembly
through?

What were the questions he would pour
At every outward-leading door?
At last he stood, with sigh long
drawn,—

Both Ugo and the maid were gone.

One said that while the guardian troop
Had gone to beat the rebels back,
He saw descend a hasty group
Across the lawn, and some were
black,—

A part of that same turbaned horde
Who tended while the wine was
poured,—

And that they moved towards a
barque:—

To shield them, then, the white
moon bowed

Behind a heavy wall of cloud:—
He saw no more, for all was dark.

IV.

THE BROTHERS.

WHAT light illumines the eagle's ken,
And flames his breast with Freedom's rage,
The first wild daring instant when
He soars beyond his broken cage!

How glows the lion's eye of fire,
Brighter than lit with midnight ire,
The moment when he sees the bar
Half drawn that leaves the door ajar!
How proudly he exalts his mane
That first hour on the open plain!

When from the winter's captive hold
The young spring takes the freedom
won,
While all his fetters crystal cold
Melt like a vision in the sun:—

Then every river, brook, and rill
Feels its deep heart with pleasure
thrill;
Then sing the birds, and every tree
Waves its gay hands for jollity.

What joy, my own dear land, was
thine,

What pleasure filled thy breast of
sorrow,

As if the heart were pulsing wine,—
What glorious sunshine filled the
noon

That cloudless, jubilant day in June
Which said, "The foe will leave
to-morrow!"

"To-morrow!" every glad eye-glance
To that sweet music seemed to dance:
Youth spread the shout from first to
last,

And Age new vigor seemed to bor-
row,

And stranger-faces, as they passed,
Looked that masonic word, "To-
morrow!"

The happy country heard afar
The answer of its long desires,
Swift sped the news from hill to
hill,
O'er plain and valley wandering
still,

As if on every mountain-bar
Was lit the flame of signal-fires.

And there were eyes in Berkley Hall,
That, bright before, were now
more bright—

Young breasts that in their rise and
fall

Were thrilled with uncontrolled
delight.

Yet there beneath the Berkley roof
Were looks that angered at the
proof,—

Dark, sullen brows, which seemed to
say

The morn would bring a hateful day.
'Twas hard to see the old reins slip
From out their doting monarch's grip;
And so, to nerve them for the worst,

The purple flask must cheer the
hour,
That they at least might slake their
thirst

For wine, if not for tyrant power.

"To-morrow, Colonel, you depart :"
This was the greeting of Sir Hugh.

"Believe me when I say my heart
Is sad to part with such as you.

I hoped ere this—but hopes are vain :
There is a higher Wisdom rules :—
Though wise His ways, they are not
plain :

'Tis strange, and yet He sometimes
deigns

To give an empire's guiding reins
Into the hardy hands of fools :—
I hoped ere this—that hope at least
Holds good, and shall not be denied—
To see my family-board increased,
To see my daughter at your side
A lovely and contented bride.

"How stands your glass ? The room
is dim :

Methinks the twilight settles soon,
In spite of the long days of June ;
And yonder rises the red moon,
As if wine flushed her golden brim.

So flush your glass ; for wine, in truth,
Which sparkles in these founts of
ours,

Is that perpetual Spring of Youth
Which Ponce de Leon strove, forsooth,
To find within the land of flowers.

Then never let our spirits sink,
Though Time and Fate their worst
pursue,

While at the bacchanalian brink
Our hearts their courage may renew.

"Ay, courage,—'tis the soldier's
word :

The hour is brighter than it seems ;
To-day, even while you stood deterred,
I caught from hope some clearer
gleams.

"Did you not notice, when we came,
And after my first warm embrace,
How flushed her cheek and eye with
flame

When she looked up and saw your
face ?

I felt her little wild heart leap,
That moment, in my claspings hand :
For Love, when he would safely keep
His head in secret hiding deep,
Is but an ostrich in the sand.

"What though her look no hope
awakes,

Repelling with disdainful eye,
'Tis but the course the salmon takes,
In scornful distance pausing shy ;
Just when you think your toil is
vain,

And when he chiefly shows disdain,
With sudden whirl he takes the
fly !

What though her mien conceals the
spell,

Believe me, friend, she loves you well.

"Who spoke ? Who dared to give
the lie ?

Ho, Steward ! lights !"

The lights were brought,
And every secret hiding-place
Was peered into with angry face.

The furious searching furnished
naught

To meet his pistol's ready rage,
Except a parrot in his cage :
Yes, surely 'twas that silly bird
Who uttered the obnoxious word.

They laughed, and sat : the wine must
serve

To smooth again the ruffled nerve.

"To prove, my friend, my words
sincere,

I have the paper ready here."
Thus spake Sir Hugh. "It only
waits

For the contracting names and dates :
'Tis quickly done. There, mine se-
cures

The seal ; and now, my friend, for
yours.

By Jove ! your pen flies o'er the
word

With all the flourish of a sword !

"The maiden's name? Ah, never doubt:

That with the rest shall soon appear.
Ho, Steward, seek your mistress out
And bid her to attend me here!"

In Berkley's breast resolve was stern,
For in his proud parental heart,
Remembering with what willing art
Her favor took the patriots' part,
He felt a deep resentment burn.

Although he loved her fondly still,
Yet, though all else should be denied,
She should not set her rebel will
Against this last hope of his pride:
It may be that the flush of wine
Gave vigor to his fixed design.

Young Esther came: her eye was bright

As if 'twere brimmed with love's own light;

Then flowed her maiden accents clear,
"What would you, father? I am here."

"A trifling service," he replied;—
There was a strangeness in the tone
Which turned her inmost heart to stone:—

"Before these written names are dried,
Let yours be drying at their side."

With wondering countenance advanced,

Her eye across the paper glanced;
Her visage showed a lightning-blight,—

The color from her cheek was blown,
As when from off some festal height

The fierce bolt strikes the banner down.

Before her flashed the ready quill,
The black blood waiting at the point;

Across her swept a deathly chill
That agued every sinking joint:

A very statue, mute and white,
She stood, till came the order,
"Write!"

"Nay, father: any thing but this,—
If 'twere to die at your command!"

He answered, "My sole order is
To write! The pen is in your hand!"

'Twas there; for he had placed it there,—

He seized her by the slender wrist.—
"Oh, help!" she cried.

"Nay, to assist
In your rebellion who shall dare?"

He answered firmly, at the word,
Tapping his pistol and his sword.

Her hand was on the paper prest:

Both watched it with their anxious ken;

The blood was curdling in her breast,
A deadly pallor veiled her mien,
The room swam round in darkness,
—when

An iron hand was thrust between,
Which snatched and crushed the crackling pen!

Three paces back, with shuddering reel,

All started, in their horror dumb;
Their tongues even as their hearts were numb;

For there a voiceless form of steel
Stood glowering as with threatening will;

For, though the visor close was down,

The very iron seemed to frown,
The clinching gauntlet grasping still

The crumpled remnant of the quill.
Within the waning light and gloom
To giant size it seemed to loom:
Such necromantic power has fright
To give to objects double height.

While now the gazers stood aghast,
The form, with slow and backward pace,

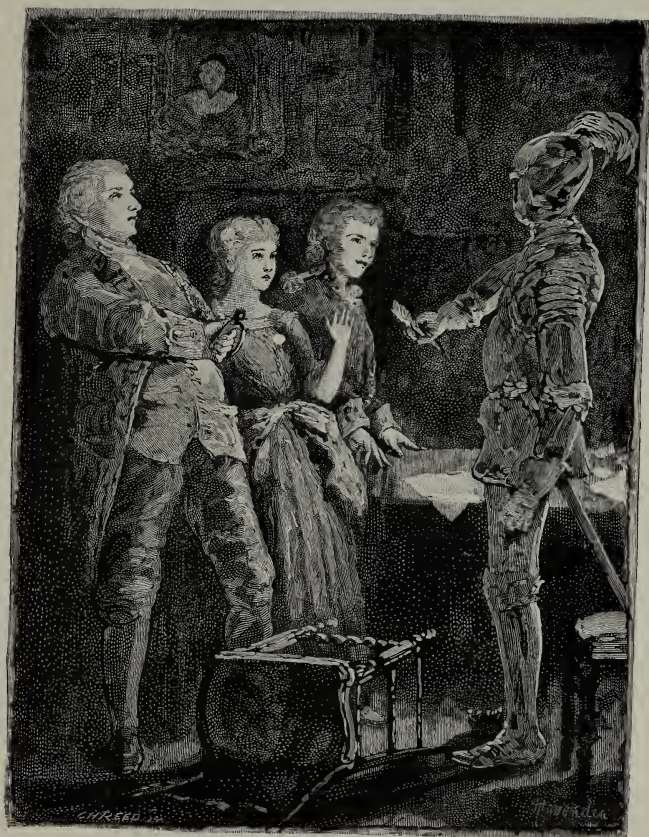
Confronting still with iron face,
Retiring, reached the throne at last
Where stood the maiden's harp of gold.

Still paler grew the lights and dim,—
Or so the frightened fancy told,—

While phantom lustre seemed to swim
About that form so ghostly grim;
And, just behind, the moon's broad rim

Seemed to the very casement rolled,
A spectral chariot waiting him:

The gazers' blood ran doubly cold
And palsied every limb.



"An iron hand was thrust between."

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But stranger still it was to see
The form slow sinking on one knee,
Upon the harp's enthroning stand,
While in his stretching arms he took
The frame, whose chords in terror
shook

Ere scarce they felt the iron hand.

Slow o'er the strings the gauntlets
stole:—

(That gloves of steel showed little
skill

In answering to the player's will,
Such audience would scarcely wonder;—

But, with a strange, weird music
still,

That waited above, then rumbled
under,

He played as 'twere a funeral dole
Chanted by distant winds and
thunder;

And when from out the helmet broke
The words in many a dying close,
It seemed as if a cavern spoke
The burden of long-hidden woes.

SONG.

I.

A shade has crossed the hill, Sir
Hugh,

A shade has crossed the lawn;
And where its phantom feet have
gone,

So lightly were they pressed there-
on,

They did not brush the evening
dew,

Sir Hugh,
They did not brush the dew.

II.

A gloom is on your house, Sir
Hugh,

Your sire frowns on the wall,—
Where frown those painted shad-
ows all,

Now pale and shuddering o'er your
fall:

The last of all the name are you,
Sir Hugh,
The last of all are you.

III.

Your royal cause is lost, Sir Hugh;
Your king recoils aghast;
His day of tyrant power is past:
Of all his friends you are the last,
Last of your cause and name are
you,

Sir Hugh,
The last of all are you.

IV.

The last of all are you, Sir Hugh,
Echoes the owl aloof,—
The last of all,—upon the roof
The whippoorwill prolongs the
proof:—

Adieu to Berkley Hall,—adieu,
Sir Hugh,
To Berkley Hall adieu.

"Behold! Sir Hugh, be not dis-
mayed!"

The suitor cried, and drew his blade.
"Do you not see it is the same
Who boldly to our tourney came
A rough, unbidden guest and foe?
I have not yet forgiven the blow:
Though it were years, in twice the
gloom

I still would know that helm and
plume."

Through Berkley's brain the light-
ning sped,

And, casting round his glances
quick,

Sir Hugh the empty niche espied;
Then, with an angry laugh, he
cried,

"A trick! By heaven! a rebel
trick!"

And scarcely had the words been
said,

The room was blinded with a flash:
The iron vision forward sprung,
And reeled the frightened group among;
And now the floor received the
crash

Of one who falls in armor dead.

Alas! if there was aught within
But ghost, to brave that bolt of lead,
That shining breastplate was too
thin!

The door, by sudden fury thrust,
Swung wide, and hurrying men
strode in,

And one, whose voice was like a gust,
Cried, "Wherefore all this murderous
din?"

Then, following Sir Hugh's wild stare,
He saw the fallen armor there,
And saw from out the iron seam
A mortal tide of crimson stream.
With hurried stride he crossed the
floor,

And knelt beside the pool of gore,
With rapid hand the visor threw,
And started backward at the view,
One look told all,—no need of more:—
From out its sheath his weapon flew.

"Behold," he cried, "O wretch,
behold

The murderous work your hand has
done!

Ay, stare upon that visage cold,
And recognize, mad fool, your son!
But, while there's strength within
this hand

And steel of vengeance in this brand,
Your heart shall pour a stream as
good,

Even though I shed a brother's
blood!"

That moment he had forward sprung,
But Esther on his right arm flung
Her form, and there she pleading
clung.

Then stood Sir Hugh as one who seems
Chained amid horrid nightmare-
dreams;

Though fain to fly the sight of gore,
His feet were frozen to the floor.

At length he stammered, still with
stare

Fixed on the pallid visage there,
"A lie!—a lie! I had no son,
And surely never such a one!"

To which the other cried again,
"Thy son, proud fool, and son of her
Whose noble heart by you was
slain,—

O cold and double murderer!"

Still staring with unmoving eye,
He said,—or rather seemed to sigh,—

"I never killed her: if she died,
It was not here——"

"Your bitter pride
Struck at her heart, until her brain
By many a cold, proud word was
slain!"

The wagoner answered; and the taunt
At last awoke the Berkley blood.

"Who dares," he cried, in furious
mood,

"Thus in my face such words to
flaunt?"

And who art thou, who ne'er before
Save once, a rude, unwelcome guest,
Was known to enter at my door?
What rebel thou, whose coward breast
Dares breathe the insult uttered
now?"

"Pray, not so fast," the other cried.
"A moment clear your clouded
brow,

And let your memory allow
I am not one to be defied!
That picture there may well attest
Whose courage ever was the best,
And which it was who quaked with
fear

The moment danger came too near.
I scorned you even as a child,
Proud, cold, and selfish as you were;
A younger brother, oft reviled,
I would not be your pensioner,
And so I left you to yourself,
With all your boasted pride and pelf.

"A rebel!—nay, let that foul name
Flush your own coward cheek with
shame:

'Tis ye are black Rebellion's knaves,
Traitors to Freedom and to God,
Who dare upon this sacred sod
Exalt the slave-compelling rod,
Being slaves yourselves, to make us
slaves!

"While throbs a heart,—while Hea-
ven is just,—

While on the banner of our trust
One star remains to fight beneath,
No blade of ours shall seek its
sheath,

No cannon hold its direful breath,
Till on the bitter field of death
The bold enslaver bites the dust.

Already, even as pictured there,
The joy has oft been mine to take
In this good grasp the tyrant snake
And fling him writhing in despair."

"My brother, thou?" Sir Hugh replied,
The while the wagoner's form he eyed,
Scanning in scorn, from head to foot,
The patriot's rough and rustic suit.
"Tis false! No Berkley scion yet
His high-born lineage could forget,
To wear such rude and menial form
And be the thing which thou art now!"—

He spake, and back recoiled a pace
Before the anger of that face:
He dared no further brook the storm
Which gathered on that threatening brow.

But now his troubled eye again
Was cast upon the stripling slain,
And, with a look which strove in vain

To hide the doubt within his brain,
He cried, "'Tis false! No blood of mine

E'er wandered vagrant through the land;

No Berkley son would raise a hand
In honor of the rebel line!
No child of mine——"

His speech was stayed;
He glared upon the trembling maid.
"Well mayst thou tremble!" he resumed,

"And sink with burning shame consumed,

Whose recreant heart and rebel eye
Now give our loyal blood the lie!

'Tis thou, with disobedience long,
This sad and direful scene hast wrought,—

Firing the youth with rebel thought
And filling his soul with rebel song;
But that shall end!" And, at the word,

Across the harp he flashed his sword
And severed every trembling chord.

"Strike on!"—this was the wagoner's taunt:

"Such courage ever was your vaunt:
With no more stripling sons to kill,
On other innocents wreak your fill!"

"Still must I hear?" Sir Hugh replied;

"Are my assertions all denied?"

The boy was never son of mine,
Though harbored long beneath my roof:

In shades condemned, or realms divine,

That truant woman's wandering ghost
No Berkley offspring dares to boast:—
I challenge every proof!"

The wagoner turned, and whispered,
"Hark!

What newer misery thrills the dark?
What voice is that approaching near?
Sir Hugh!—Sir Hugh!—look up and hear!"

Thus as he spoke, a mournful air
Seemed winding down the shadowy stair,

Still nearing and more near; and soon
The words came clearly with the tune.

SONG.

I.

Oh, cold was the bridegroom,
All frozen with pride:
He first slew her lover,
Then made her his bride.

II.

Beneath a green willow,
And under a stone,
They buried her lover,
And left her alone.

III.

With naught but the bridegroom's
Proud breast for her head,
Oh, how could she live when
Her lover was dead?

IV.

Her body they buried
Beside the church wall;
Her ghost with the bridegroom
Sat up in the hall:—

v.

Sat up at his table,
Lay down in his bed :—
Oh, cold was the bridegroom,—
But colder the dead !

The singer entered. Was it a ghost,
Or sleeper walking unaware ?
Her large eyes, as in revery lost,
Bent forward their unearthly stare ;
Wild o'er her shoulders fell her
hair ;
Her face was like her garments white ;
Her thin hands bore a wavering light,
Which shed a pale and mournful
glare

Across those features of despair.

Still forward walked that form of awe,
As if her wide eyes nothing saw,
Until, in middle of the room,
The centre of that scene of gloom,
She cast a slow, dull glance around,
And looked as she had nothing found :
Across their very faces past

Those eyes to which all seemed a
blank,
Till on the floor her glance was cast ;
And there, as that look was her last,
She gazed upon those features white ;
From out her fingers dropt the light,
And on the armored breast she
sank.

It needed but that last wild gust
Of grief to blow from Nora's frame
Life's low, unsteady, flickering
flame,
And leave it dark and soulless dust.

"Sir Hugh !—Sir Hugh !" He was
not there :
Sir Hugh was gone, they knew not
where.

But there the haughty suitor stood,
His bright sword flashing in his
hand,
As if the keen, defying brand
His nuptial claim should still make
good.

This saw the wagoner, as he laid
On Edgar's arm the fainting maid ;
And, ere the soldier was aware,
He stood without a weapon there :

His sword was in the patriot's hold,
Who with a look of scorn surveyed
The face so lately flushed and bold ;
Then, with contemptuous movement
fleet,

Across his knee he snapped the
blade,
And flung it at the wearer's feet,
And now, the wide door pointing
through,
Exclaimed, with sad but threatening
brow,

"Depart ! The place is sacred now :
Go, follow thou Sir Hugh !"

CONCLUSION.

My friend abruptly closed the book :
I felt as one who long had sailed
Gazing with anxious landward look,—

Who, just as the fair port is hailed,
And the rough prow goes dipping in,
Suddenly hears the anchor's din,
And, lo ! the ship is at full stand :
There move the people on the land,
And there are voices from the beach,
But mournfully all out of reach.

My face the crowding questions wore :
He said, "A little patience yet,
And soon the landing skiff and oar
Your feet upon the shore shall set."
Then at the sinking fire his hands
Gathered and piled the sundered
brands,

Until the hearth was reilluminated :
"Tis thus," he said, "the story
stands :—

A fallen end or two demands
To be regathered and consumed.

"How goes the wine ? 'Tis rare and
old :

Or do you taste the earthy mould ?
Some seasons past, while men of mine
Were hollowing out an ample space
To give our hothouse-wall its base,
I stood to watch them bravely delve

And see they followed well the line,
When suddenly to its very helve
The pick went in with crush and crash,
Spattering all with a purple splash ;

And when withdrawn—oh, murderous sign !—

'Twas bathed in the streaming blood of wine.

How it came there to you is plain, And this brings up Sir Hugh again.

'Tis said that on that night of pain He rushed into the moonlit air, And sped for hours he knew not where,

Through fields and woods, by the river's brim,

With two sad phantoms following him ;—

How once, just as he thought he saw The crowning horror of his awe,

The murdered stripling in his path Rise with confronting eyes of wrath,

He reeled and staggered, fainted, fell, And lay at the feet of a sentinel ;

And when he awoke, and the horrid mists

From off his aching brow were blown,

He found himself within the town, Among the guards of the royalists.

" He recognized the hand of Fate ;

And, after writing a hurried scrawl, Giving his daughter Berkley Hall ²¹

And his blessing with the broad estate, He boarded a ship and felt more free

While bidding adieu to river and bay ;

But his heart was withering day by day,

And at last they buried him far at sea.

" The lovers ? Ah, more sweet the lay Should be which sings of those so dear :

It is not long since, old and gray,

My sainted parents passed from here.

" If 'twere not that the fire is low,

And chanticleer awakes to throw

His midnight signal on the air,

A sacred scene should newly glow

Of that beloved and loving pair.

" My mother's favorite seat was there,

And this my father's high-backed chair :

How clearly comes the long-gone scene

When I a child sat here between !

" One night,—I well recall the hour,—

Just when our second war was past,

The winds were howling o'er the tower,

The snow its gulfy deluge poured,

And up the chimney like a blast

The flame from off the hickory

roared,

Against the outer door a blow

Sounded like a blacksmith's sledge,

And, waiting no further privilege,

Entered, it seemed, the Prince of

Snow,—

A veteran of giant height,

With wild locks like his garments

white.

The heavy stamping and the beat,

Which piled a drift within the hall,

Rang through the house and

wakened all

The echoes to announce his feet.

So thick the cloud he scattered wide.

And so majestic was the fling,

He seemed a very arctic king

Throwing his furry robe aside.

" My sire, awakened by the stir,

Gazed through the door with shaded eyes,

Puzzled a moment with vague surprise ;

But when he saw that giant size,

And heard the voice of bluff replies,

He knew and welcomed the Wagoner.

" Had you beheld him stride the floor,

You ne'er had guessed how many a score

Of years had blown their changeful air

Through those white locks to whiten there.

" We offered him this cushioned seat :

He took yon great oak chair instead,—

It felt more saddle-like, he said,—

And flung him down with wide-spread feet.

" 'Tis seventy years,' he cried, ' or more,

Since first I backed a good stout steed ;

And though to-day with as fearless speed

I rode as in the days of yore,

I know that wild, free course is o'er.

It boots not to prolong the strife :
That brave, old-fashioned, cheery life
Is ended. My contented grip

Resigns at last the guiding reins :
No more my bells o'er hills and
plains

Shall ring, as once, through these
domains.

And therefore I have brought my
whip,

To hang it up in Berkley Hall,
To see it grace yon antlers tall

Which hold those old swords on the
wall,

The rusty weapons of Sir Hugh :
The honor is its well-earned due.'

"We welcomed him with hearty will,
And wished him many bright years
still,

Then brought the wine—we knew the
sort—

And brimmed a goblet with old port.
Through the red cup he gazed awhile,
In musing, with a strange, sad smile.'

"'Good Uncle Ralph,' my mother
sighed,

Dropping the embroidery in her lap,
'One question I have often tried
To solve; and yet, through some
mishap,

It seems conjecture wandered wide :
But you, I think, can solve for me
Poor Nora's mournful history.'

"The old man looked at her a space,
Looked vaguely in her upturned face,
As if endeavoring to recall

The far scenes of the past, and
said,—

'For her sake you should know it
all,

For my sake, too, when I am dead ;
But first, my friends, let me make
clear

The reason I to-night am here.

"Beside the old churchyard to-day

The surly sexton crossed my way :
He glared at me with sidelong leer,

And flung his spade across the wall.

Just then a hurrying team drew near :
The horses, wagon, bells, and all

(Believe me, 'twas a marvellous sign)
Seemed like the very ghosts of mine ;

The driver—for once I held my breath,
To see the flash

Of his maniac lash—

Was a rattling skeleton, grim and
tall ;

His shout was the hollow shout of
Death !

"My team, with many a plunge and
rear,

Went mad, then stood like frightened
deer,

While I sat like a girl aghast,

Until that awful wagoner passed ;
And when I looked behind, 'twas
gone,

And we were in the road alone.

"Think not that superstitious fright
Could cheat my ear or mock my
sight ;

Although the calendar counts me
old,

My heart is as the youngest bold.

Brave Percy, when his charger stood
First on the field of Brandywine,²²

Beheld, in clear, prophetic mood,
The spot which should receive his
blood ;

He saw his form's distinct outline
Stretched on the sod,—his steed, in
fright,

Dashing riderless through the fight ;
Then instantly he galloped on,
And sought the fate he could not
shun.

"It is a bitter night ; the cold
For the first time now makes me
old :

Another cup of this warm wine
Perchance will give the blood a
start,

And thaw the chill about my heart,
And clear this hazy brain of mine.'

"Again his vague eye scanned the
glass,

As if he saw old memories pass

In many a long and wavering line ;
And, as he held the glowing cup

Between him and the lamp-light up,

The color of the deep wine threw

Across his face a purple hue :

I could but shudder where I stood,

It looked so like a dash of blood.

"At last he spoke in under-tone,—
'Those grand old times are past and
gone;

But, Esther,'—here his eye grew
bright

With something of its former light,—
'Do you remember how of old
Around our cause your numbers
rolled?

I ever loved a fiery song;
But there was something in your
voice

Which made the listener's heart re-
joice,

His eye of courage burn more bright,
And filled him with a fierce delight

That did not to the words belong:
To hear again such music sung
Would make a veteran heart grow
young.'

"My mother's cheek turned some-
what red

To hear the praise so bluffly said;
It seemed to bring the vanished days
What time her song was used to
praise.

She looked, and smiled, and shook
her head,

And said her voice had lost its
power,

Her singing summer day had sped,
And she was in her autumn bower;

The water of a spring-time brook
Makes plenteous music through the
land,

But surely 'twas an idle look

Which sought it in October's sand;
Her harp, too, since that night of
pain

Had never known its chords again.

"But still within her secret breast
She thought to humor him were
best:

What though her voice had somewhat
failed,

His aged ear, so long assailed

By Winter, could not be o'er-nice,
The sense so long inured to storm
Might deem the cadence still was
warm,

Nor note its chill of autumn ice:—
And thus, to please an old man's
whim,

With folded hands, she sang to him.

SONG. ~

I.

When sailed our swift eagle
O'er valley and highland,
The foe, like a sea-gull,
Fled back to his island,—
Fled back to his king-land,
His home in the ocean,—
The white cliffs of England,
His pride and devotion.

II.

Now peace and contentment
Fill cottage and manor;
No star of resentment
Is lit on our banner.
Our cannon is sleeping
The port-shadows under;
The spell in its keeping
Let naught break asunder.

III.

The impotent taunt let
Go by,—the wind brings it;
But not the red gauntlet,
No matter who flings it.
Who palters and falters,
Ne'er hearken his story,
But strike for your altars,
For Freedom and Glory.

"Nay, never say,' the old man cried,
'Your voice is like a brooklet dried;
But rather say 'tis filled again,
O'erflowing with the autumn rain.

"It carries me back, both brain and
heart,
As if a gale swept o'er the scroll;
I see the storied past unroll;
And now, methinks, I may impart
Something of Nora and the child.

"My memory is a restive colt,
Stubborn at times, contrary, wild,
At the wrong moment apt to bolt;
But wine upon an old man's lip,
To such a steed, is spur and whip.'

"Then laughed he his accustomed
laugh,

That shook the glasses on the board,
And, with a long and breathless
quaff,

The wine across his lip was poured:
The goblet dropt from out his hold,
And crashed to fragments on the
floor;

Slow sank his chin, slow drooped his
lid,

His heavy hands beside him slid;

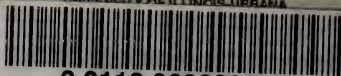
He slept,—ay, slept,—but breathed
no more,
And left the story still untold.

"As when some monarch of the trees,
Which held so long defiant state
Against the lightning and the gale,
O'erborne at last by its own
weight,

While laughing in the passing breeze,
Falls prone in the astonished vale,—
So fell our grand old Hercules."



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